SHAYKH ʾABŪ AL-ḤASAN ʿALĪ NADWĪ

His Life & Works

MOḤAMMAD ʾAKRAM NADWĪ

Transliteration Key

Consonants:

ء	ʾ	د	*d*	ض	*ḍ*	ك	*k*
ب	*b*	ذ	*dh*	ط	*ṭ*	ل	*l*
ت	*t*	ر	*r*	ظ	*ẓ*	م	*m*
ث	*th*	ز	*z*	ع	ʿ	ن	*n*
ج	*j*	س	*s*	غ	*gh*	ه	*h*
ح	*ḥ*	ش	*sh*	ف	*f*	و	*w*
خ	*kh*	ص	*ṣ*	ق	*q*	ي	*y*

Short vowels:	ـَ	ـُ	ـِ
	a	*u*	*i*
Long vowels:	ـَا	ـُو	ـِي
	ā	*ū*	*ī*
Dipthongs:	ـَو	ـَي	
	aw	*ay*	

Honorific Symbols

ﷺ May God's blessings and peace be upon him
عليه السلام May peace be upon him
عليها السلام May peace be upon her
عليهما السلام May peace be upon them both
عليهم السلام May peace be upon them
رضي الله عنه May God be pleased with him
رضي الله عنها May God be pleased with her
رضي الله عنهما May God be pleased with them both
رضي الله عنهم May God be pleased with them

Hijri Coversion Table

718	100 AH	1203	600 AH	1688	1100 AH
815	200	1300	700	1785	1200
912	300	1397	800	1882	1300
1009	400	1494	900	1979	1400
1106	500	1591	1000	11/01/2013	29/02/1434

Note: words are transliterated as written, not spoken; place names appear in English unless they are unknown in the English language. Sub-continent names follow the Arabic convention throughout the book.

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PREFACE

All praise is due to God. We praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Him from the mischief of ourselves and of our actions. There is none to lead astray whomever He guides, and none to guide whomever He leads astray. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except God, that He is one, without peer or partner. I testify that Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave and Messenger, the seal of the Prophets, the chosen one, and our leader and master. May God grant him His peace and blessings, and to his family and his Companions and to those who, in striving to emulate them, strive to be rightly guided.

Credit for initiating and sustaining the effort to present an English version of my biography of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī[1] must go to Sulaiman Kazi. It is he who has carried the burdens of engaging a translator and then seeing the work through to publication. I am most grateful to him. Next, my thanks go to Mahomed Mahomedy Nadwī, the translator, for his patience and conscientiousness in rendering the whole of the Arabic into English. I was delighted to find that he followed the excellent ʾIslāmic practice of concluding his work with a prayer and a note of the date when he completed it.[2]

As I read the full translation, it became ever clearer that the book as originally conceived in Arabic for an Arabic-speaking readership could not work in English for an English-speaking readership. The purpose of my extensive quotations from the work of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, who excelled in Arabic, was to enable readers to experience the vibrancy and spirit, as well as the sense of his arguments, those qualities are conveyed through the literary affect and artistry of his original, and cannot be conveyed in a different language without departing substantially from the original wording, which risks altering the sensibility of the text, something that no conscientious scholarly translator would do. I had also quoted extensively from published reactions to the person and work of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, written by people whose perspective and belief had been deeply affected by him. Here again, for the same reason as before, some of the impact of their words of love and appreciation could not be rendered without moving away from the sense of the original wording.

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[1] Moḥammad ʾAkram Nadwī, *ʾAbu al-Ḥasan Nadwī - al-ʿĀlim al-Murabbī wa al-Dāʿiyat al-Ḥakīm*, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2005). Additionally, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī's name is referred to as Mawlānā ʾAbul Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī in the sub-continent, where he was also affectionately known as ʿAlī Miyah.

[2] He wrote, "All praise is due to God, Exalted is He, for enabling us to complete the translation of this book. May He make it a means of our success in this world and salvation in the hereafter. ʾĀmīn. Mahomed Mahomedy Nadwī. 2nd March 2009 (4th Rabīʿ al-ʾAwwal 1430 AH)."

I turned to a friend and Oxford neighbour, Jamil Qureshi, for advice on how to present the book in English. On the basis of my explanation (as below) of why an account of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's life and work in English is *ʾin shāʾ Allāh* worthwhile, his advice was to reduce the extent and number of quoted texts to the minimum needed to convey Shaykh Nadwī's argument and mission and the reactions of his contemporaries and peers, and to leave the literary aspect of the passages quoted to the readers' sympathetic imagination. He also suggested a summary statement of the Shaykh's mission (this now appears as the Afterword). I am grateful for his advice and for help in following it. My thanks are also extended to Sahil Mughal for proofreading the entire text and offering valuable suggestions. Similarly, I received generous assistance from Nasar Ishfaq, who diligently incorporated revisions and inserted diacritical marks to the text. He also worked energetically in respect of the cover design, typesetting and proofreading of the book. Needless to say, any shortcomings in the final result are entirely my responsibility.

Let me now explain why and how a Western readership might benefit by learning about the life and work of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī.

Non-specialist readers in the West, if they get to know about contemporary Muslim activists at all, get to know either the kind of activist (self-proclaimed or applauded as "ʾIslām's Luther") to whom the West sooner or later will have to give some sort of safe passport, or the kind whom the West will have to anathematise or, as the Americans now seem to prefer, peremptorily "take out". In other words, the two kinds of activist-Muslim voices that are heard, and which enter into public consciousness at some level, are trying either to promote a cultural accommodation with the West or to reject and destroy the possibility of such accommodation. In point of fact, while these kinds of activist are given a lot of publicity in the media of the West and also in the ʾIslāmic world, they do not have much following among the great majority of Muslims. These are not the kinds of voices Muslims spend most of their time listening to. The reason is that most of the time Muslims who are listening to speeches about ʾIslām are listening to teachers and preachers explaining ʾIslām in relation to itself and in relation to how far or near their audience are to the ideals they are supposed to be striving for. If the aim is to understand a Muslim perspective and activities, the general public is getting quite the wrong input. Moreover, that input is severely decontextualised, not only in the sense that sound bites and visual images are always decontextualised, but in the sense that what these activists say is not set against any kind of recognisable full human life. The absence of such a context for the discourse of party politicians is not generally problematic. We need only to hear their line on particular policy issues, and the rest of who and what they are is mostly irrelevant because it can be assumed to be within the *normal* range. But in the case of Muslim activists, the absence of any sense of normal everyday human life behind their activist words means there is no

normal to have assumptions about. Accordingly, activism which rejects the West is too readily labelled *irrational hate-speech, impossible to work with*; while West-accommodating activism is too readily accorded friendly epithets like *rational and reasonable*, *realistic*, *progressive*, etc. This view of Muslim activism builds no relationship with the reality of Muslim lives and aspirations. The result is that general public consciousness among non-Muslims makes no progress whatever in understanding what ʾIslām is about and what Muslims think it is for. The general ignorance of ʾIslām and the antipathy to it remain at much the same level despite hours of intensive, almost daily, media coverage, especially over the last two decades.

Through this presentation of a great Muslim activist's life and work, I hope that readers in the West will derive a clear grasp of the following:

That the vast majority of Muslims *love* being Muslim, and this love is not an instinctive reflexive loyalty, like *love* of one's children or parents, but is based on an honestly-held conviction that being Muslim helps them to be better human beings and to contribute to building a better world. Muslims may disagree about how best to go about doing that, and about how, why and where they are failing in their efforts to be good at being Muslim.

For some Muslims, so great is this love of ʾIslām and confidence in its being a force for good in the world that they dedicate their lives to studying and teaching its sources and history, regard this studying and teaching as an effort of worship, and also (albeit not always successfully) urge their children and other relatives to follow them in this service. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was born into such a family.

Out of those scholars, depending on circumstances and temperament, a substantial number view themselves as part of an international community, and eagerly seek to share, exchange, debate and extend their understanding and experience of their role as bearers of the legacy of the Prophets ﷺ. Travelling internationally in the quest for knowledge is a well-established practice in the history of ʾIslāmic scholarship. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was conspicuously active in many different lands and in many different spheres of activism on behalf of ʾIslām.

Given the present realities that Muslims find themselves in, it is generally agreed among ʾIslāmic scholars that their posture needs to be, in broad terms, defensive and conservative. Indeed, not only Muslim but all *traditional* lifestyles are under the same threat of erosion by modern economic practices and their disabling, alienating effects on human relationships with others, with the natural world and, most importantly, with God. For Muslims, necessarily, this entails some degree of resistance to Western life-styles. Here, a range of responses to Western presence and power are witnessed, from openly combative to openly defeatist. However, there is a central, mainstream posture, well-grounded in the tradition of orthodox Sunni ʾIslām, around which most scholars congregate, namely, to affirm and yield no ground on the

core beliefs, principles, rites and symbols that underpin ʾIslāmic life, to oppose injustice and oppression with honest and vigorous speech but without sedition or rebellion. Self-evidently, that mainstream posture can be held in an indolent or cowardly way by not taking the risk of honest speech or not sustaining it, or with energy and conviction. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's life and work is an inspiring example of how to sustain the best speech on behalf of ʾIslām through a long, busy life.

Public exponents of ʾIslām, whether known internationally or locally, are necessarily familiar to those whom they live amongst and interact with. Their reputation for disinterested or interested service soon becomes known, and most particularly the quality of their love of God and His Messenger as expressed in their words, their manners, their handling of the different goods of this world, including fame, their response to family, friends, rivals, to rich and poor, to different political pressures, etc. Unlike public figures in the West, ʾIslāmic scholars cannot claim to stand for one thing and follow a life-style that contradicts the sincerity of that claim: expertise in the primary sources of ʾIslām does not by itself make an Islamic scholar either ʾIslāmic, or useful to fellow Muslims. That expertise has to be practised and embodied in order to be convincing and persuasive. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan specially loved biographical studies of the great Muslims of the far and near past precisely because through such studies one sees ʾIslām lived and embodied, not merely pronounced and promised.

It is my hope that readers will get a clear sense, from this account of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's own life and work, of the wealth of resources that Muslims can draw on, how much they love their religion, the range of virtues they seek to nurture and produce in themselves and in others, the diverse ways they try to help and support one another, and their efforts to worship dutifully and speak truthfully, obey the law, be moderate and balanced in their tastes and expenditures, and be mild, kindly, courteous and respectful to others, without the least sacrifice of ardour on behalf of ʾIslām. The Shaykh called his fellow Muslims to universally recognised goodness, something that should be equally apparent both to non-Muslims and Muslims. If non-Muslims are in sympathy with that viewpoint, then the fact that those sympathies are expressed in a confidently ʾIslāmic idiom should not deter appreciation of a life dedicated to the service of good.

Shaykh Nadwī's life and works also have their own particular content and colouring, unique to his person, his temperament and his circumstances. Following the narrative of his family history and upbringing, and the major enduring influences on his ideas and practice as a Muslim, I present different areas of his work, his learning and studies, his role as a leader and guide, his writings, and finally by way of summation, his *daʿwah* and *tarbiyah*, calling people to ʾIslām and training others to do so, with a section on how he dealt with groups and movements that diverged from his own preferred emphases.

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Moḥammad ʾAkram Nadwī
Oxford

I. BACKGROUND

The political situation

The influence of the Muslims in India, and of their culture, was strong until the late Mughal period when the central authority fragmented and foreigners, particularly the British, were able to exploit political divisions to their advantage. The East India Company, which had been, as we would now say, a *multi-national corporation*, quickly evolved into an imperial power, its predatory trading practices protected and expanded by an efficient and brutally callous military occupation. Among those Muslims who recognised the danger of what was happening and fought against it was the ruler of Mysore, Fatḥ ʿAlī Khān, popularly known as Tīpū Sulṭān. He battled with great military skill and political resolve for almost two decades. However, the British were able to bribe or intimidate other rulers to ally with them against him and, eventually, he was defeated. He died in battle in 1799/1213 AH. The *jihād* against the British resumed under ʾImām Sayyid ʾAḥmad ibn ʿIrfān Shahīd. He called on the Muslims to defend their religion and re-establish a government that would uphold ʾIslāmic laws and values. He too died in battle on the famous battlefield of Balakot in 1830/1246 AH. But the spirit of *jihād* that he had kindled across India was by no means extinguished: the duty of *daʿwah*, awakening Muslims to their responsibilities, was carried all over India by Sayyid ʾAḥmad ibn ʿIrfān's dispersed followers. Their efforts contributed to the general uprising of 1857/1273 AH in which Muslims and Hindus alike took part, and which British history has called the Mutiny. The Muslims rallied under the banner of the last Mughal emperor, Sirāj al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh and fought in his name in every part of India. But, for reasons not relevant to the present discourse, this struggle also failed to get rid of the British. The victorious British exacted a terrible revenge, especially targeting Muslims, which called to people's minds the exemplary massacres by the forces of Genghis Khan and Hulagu. However, once they had achieved their goal, the massacres came to an end. The British revenge was different - it was accompanied by extraordinary self-righteousness, it was sustained, and it was followed up with a re-writing of history that was to have far-reaching consequences for the possibility of political co-existence between Muslims and Hindus.

The British tried to change the ʾIslāmic identity of some major regions of India to make it easier for them to consolidate their authority on other ʾIslāmic centres such as Delhi and Agra. They began encouraging the Hindus to migrate to Delhi and the surrounding areas, and made efforts to educate them so that they would be able to run the higher administrative offices in India. But the fire of resistance was not put out.

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In 1884/1301 AH the Indian National Conference was held representing both Muslims and Hindus. Public gatherings then took place in different parts of the country. When the Balkan Wars broke out in 1912/1330 AH, with Britain and Russia supporting the nationalist independence movements against Ottoman rule, the people in general gave vent to their anger against the governments of Europe and their leader, Britain. ʾIslāmic political sentiment surged, Mawlānā ʾAbu al-Kalām ʾĀzād founded the weekly *al-Hilāl* to give direction and voice to it. The paper began publishing fiery essays and articles criticising with great force and eloquence European missionary politics. Other newspapers and periodicals followed suit, spreading the call for political and intellectual independence in India. The Khilāfah movement, established under the leadership of Mawlānā Muḥammad ʿAlī Jawhar, focused this call with a view to uniting Muslims and Hindus in opposition to the stance of the British government and its allies against the Ottoman Empire, and demanding an independent government and freedom for India. This show of unity between Muslims and Hindus posed a severe threat to British rule which by this stage had come to depend heavily on turning one community against the other. They convinced some pliable Hindu leaders to voice a demand that Hindus who had embraced ʾIslām should revert to their former religion, and that the Hindu peoples should be established as a distinct nation on a religious and martial foundation. The superiority of the Muslims, their ardour and the effective organisation of the Khilāfah movement, were evident in that they provided the main core of political energy in the struggle for independence.

The British by no means slackened their efforts. Religious controversies heated up and communal riots broke out. The British befriended those Hindus and Sikhs who were becoming more antagonistic to Muslims and were orchestrating massacres against them. Large numbers of Muslims were killed without any British or local Hindu leader - notably including Gandhi - paying much attention or trying to stop the killings. The perception grew among many Muslim leaders that there was an unwritten agreement between the British, Sikhs and Hindus to put an end to the Muslims in India, one way or another. It was at this point that Mawlānā Muḥammad ʿAlī and many of his associates withdrew from the Indian National Conference. The British had evidently succeeded in poisoning the unity between Muslims and Hindus. Over time, the Muslim League was formed which, eventually, would accept the partitioning of India and mass population transfers.

The condition of the Arab and other peoples of the ʾIslāmic world was not different from that of India. During the First World War (1914-18/1332-36 AH), the Europeans incited Arab nationalism against Turkish rule, with T. E. Lawrence playing a key role. He persuaded Sharīf Ḥusayn in Ḥijāz and the leaders of Syria to side with their Allies, despite the fact that the Allies were led by the British, whose history of crimes against ʾIslām and Muslims was by then long and bloody. In so doing the Arabs chose to betray

the Turks, who had carried the flag of ʾIslām in Europe for five centuries, and who, even in their falling from power, remained a symbol of potential Muslim strength. The Arabs relied on promises that were bound to destroy them; they chose to serve the British and the French - their service was rewarded with the establishment of Israel. The tie of allegiance to the *Khilāfah* and the symbolic unity of the Muslims ended in 1924/1342 AH, when the Allies broke their promises and began colonising the lands of ʾIslām.

The catastrophe that struck the Palestinians shook the whole Arab world. Some very hasty decisions were taken amongst the disunited Arab ranks leaving them grasping to understand and explain what had happened to them. On what basis indeed could they now trust each other? The most absurd explanation of their political and cultural weakness was presented. It was the very same reason put forward among the Turks somewhat earlier; the Arab elites came to believe that their failures were due to the influence of ʾIslām on the social and political development of their societies. Since this explanation contradicted the known history of the region, its absurdity should have been obvious, yet this reason began to gather steam. With Christian Arabs taking a prominent role in this movement supported by foreign governments, a markedly *secular-nationalist* intellectual trend took hold in the Arab lands. Nationalism and socialism were deployed to rally the Arabs and focus their energies. They supposed this would unite them and give them the strength to achieve independence. However, while Israel gained in strength, unity and territory, the Arabs grew in weakness and disunity. The utter failure of this approach did not sink in until the second catastrophe of 1967/1386 AH.

The intellectual situation

European military conquest of ʾIslāmic lands was accompanied by a will not just to rule over the peoples in these lands but to bring their resources into an enduring relationship of service to feed the European power-hungry social and economic systems. Since those systems entailed concepts, values and relationships between state, law and society alien to the Muslim way of life, the Muslim way of life had to be weakened and replaced with the new order. For this reason, an intellectual and cultural colonisation followed hard after the military conquest. Its tools were the introduction of Western schooling, the use of Western languages and, to a lesser extent, colonial state support for missionary activities. Western schooling necessarily entailed the instilling of Western historical and intellectual perspectives, especially in regards to the history of the conquered peoples, and in concepts that shape attitudes to authority, power, society and religion. The application of those tools was accompanied by measures that systematically undermined and re-ordered the economic relationships and administrative structures of the conquered peoples

In 1884/1301 AH the Indian National Conference was held representing both Muslims and Hindus. Public gatherings then took place in different parts of the country. When the Balkan Wars broke out in 1912/1330 AH, with Britain and Russia supporting the nationalist independence movements against Ottoman rule, the people in general gave vent to their anger against the governments of Europe and their leader, Britain. ʾIslāmic political sentiment surged, Mawlānā ʾAbu al-Kalām ʾĀzād founded the weekly *al-Hilāl* to give direction and voice to it. The paper began publishing fiery essays and articles criticising with great force and eloquence European missionary politics. Other newspapers and periodicals followed suit, spreading the call for political and intellectual independence in India. The Khilāfah movement, established under the leadership of Mawlānā Muḥammad ʿAlī Jawhar, focused this call with a view to uniting Muslims and Hindus in opposition to the stance of the British government and its allies against the Ottoman Empire, and demanding an independent government and freedom for India. This show of unity between Muslims and Hindus posed a severe threat to British rule which by this stage had come to depend heavily on turning one community against the other. They convinced some pliable Hindu leaders to voice a demand that Hindus who had embraced ʾIslām should revert to their former religion, and that the Hindu peoples should be established as a distinct nation on a religious and martial foundation. The superiority of the Muslims, their ardour and the effective organisation of the Khilāfah movement, were evident in that they provided the main core of political energy in the struggle for independence.

The British by no means slackened their efforts. Religious controversies heated up and communal riots broke out. The British befriended those Hindus and Sikhs who were becoming more antagonistic to Muslims and were orchestrating massacres against them. Large numbers of Muslims were killed without any British or local Hindu leader - notably including Gandhi - paying much attention or trying to stop the killings. The perception grew among many Muslim leaders that there was an unwritten agreement between the British, Sikhs and Hindus to put an end to the Muslims in India, one way or another. It was at this point that Mawlānā Muḥammad ʿAlī and many of his associates withdrew from the Indian National Conference. The British had evidently succeeded in poisoning the unity between Muslims and Hindus. Over time, the Muslim League was formed which, eventually, would accept the partitioning of India and mass population transfers.

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so that, even had they wished it, they could not sustain their own educational and cultural legacy. The long-term goal of these efforts was to alienate Muslims from their own values, standards, civilisation and history, so that they would come to believe that as a force for organising social, economic and political relationships, ʾIslām had no future.

The cultural colonisation thus aimed at uprooting ʾIslām as a way of life, removing the Muslims' hopes and confidence in it, making it irrelevant to the greater part of their lives. The aim was achieved to the extent that Muslim intellectual life was thoroughly disoriented; it fractured into groups taking different positions of despondency and strategic aimlessness on how to cope with the challenge.

The educational situation

When the British took control of India in 1857/1273 AH, they found the villages and cities of the country peppered with Muslim schools and teaching institutions, with especially large educational centres in and around Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, Rampur, Bulgram, Khairabad, Jaunpur and Hyderabad. The British cut off all funding for these institutions, and directed all the resources of the state to impose a new educational system that would sever the bond of the people with their religion, history and culture. As well as being starved of funds, the old schools were also unable to provide the education and training that would lead to employment and livelihood in the *New-Order*. Jobs were only offered after the completion of an English education. Countless Muslim schools and educational institutions closed.

The pattern of response among Muslims in India was very similar to what happened in other European colonies. Eventually two distinct parties emerged: a party of *modernists* whose occupations, thinking and education aligned them to the colonial power; and a party of *traditionalists* who undertook to safeguard their ʾIslāmic values at whatever cost and opposed European manners in all areas of life. The first party stood for the ideals and values of the materialist and capitalist system to which they were attached: if they imagined freedom and independence for themselves, it was as new masters of the same system. This group knew nothing about its ʾIslāmic heritage, norms and ideals, except as filtered and re-valued by the European perspective. Their ʾIslām, insofar as it survived, would have to be a *modernised* one. The second party, representing the ʾIslāmic heritage which, in practical terms, was isolated and cut off from the present current of life, wanted nothing from the Europeans. If they imagined freedom and independence they imagined it as a re-instatement of everything as they supposed it had been. They did not countenance the use of *ʾijtihād* in jurisprudence to recognise there had been some worthwhile novelty in literature, or advancement in knowledge, or invention in manufacture, or

improvement in economic organisation. Their ʾIslām, insofar as it was recoverable, would only be a reproduction of what it had been two or three generations ago.

In India these two movements became clear in the development of two very different institutions. The modernist school, represented by the Aligarh Movement, saw no alternative to emulating the British in their culture, civilisation, ways and manners: the benefit of the Aligarh movement - for what it was worth - was that not all senior posts under the British administration were filled by Hindus; Muslims were also represented. On the other side, the Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband under the leadership of ʾImāmayn [1], Muḥammad Qāsim Nānotwī (d. 1880/1297 AH) and Rashīd ʾAḥmad Gangohī (d. 1905/1323 AH), filled much of India with ʾIslāmic schools, which secured the transfer to the next generation of the Arabic language, Qurʾānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. This movement also played a major role in reviving the Sunnah and putting an end to innovations in creed and ritual. However, in its severity of approach, it was somewhat cut off from the general population.

There was no common ground between these two distinct camps, each with its supporters, albeit both camps were composed of Muslims. There was a need to bridge the gap, to bring a new educational system that combined the good of both movements. In 1894/1311 AH, a group of learned scholars met at Madrasah Fayḍ ʿĀm in Kanpur with the aim of doing just that. This movement called itself Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. Its goals were to remove the gulf between the traditionalist *ʿulamāʾ* and the modernists, to put an end to juridical and intellectual fanaticism, and to reform the educational system. In order to apply its ideology, the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ Movement established a Dār al-ʿUlūm in 1898/1317 AH in the city of Lucknow. By God's grace the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ Movement gained the support of ʿAllāmah Shiblī Nuʿmānī who combined ʾIslāmic sciences with various accomplishments in the old and modern cultures. He had travelled to the capitals of the ʾIslāmic and Arab world and therefore had an expansive view of the ʾIslāmic legacy. He devoted himself to the development of Dār al-ʿUlūm, training its students in the field of research and inquiry, preparing them for *daʿwah*, and enabling them to refute the Orientalists and other enemies of ʾIslām.[2]

Shaykh Nadwī grew up in a part of the ʾIslāmic world suffering under the weight of British military, intellectual and educational occupation. However, his immediate family environment was safe from the worst effects of that occupation. He was aware of it, of course, but it did not undermine the clarity or strength of his conviction of the truth of ʾIslām, nor his scholarly, religious, spiritual and *jihādī* commitment to it. As we shall see in the next chapter, first

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[1] Dual form of ʾImām, in this conext the title refers to the two great scholars of India, ʾImām Nānotwī and ʾImām Gangohī.

[2] See Moḥammad ʾAkram Nadwī, *Shiblī Nuʿmānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 2001).

his father, and then his older brother were key figures in the Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ movement, which he himself would, in time, lead and guide. Here, I record his gratitude that from his first years his ᵓIslām was safe and strong:

> Among the things which God blessed me with out of His grace and wisdom is that I grew up in an environment which was safe from the enchantment of Western civilisation. In fact, it was an environment which rebelled against it, which was far from excesses and shortcomings, and was fully inhabited by correct ᵓIslāmic beliefs. I then had the honour of studying under teachers who, apart from their academic excellence, enjoyed intellectual freedom, inherent boldness, and the power to observe and criticise. The fruits of growing up in this pure environment was that I was naturally averse to absorbing writings which displayed weakness, regret, defeat and apologetic foundations.[3]

[3] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Purānī Chirāgh* (Karachi: Majlis Nashriyyāt ᵓIslām, n.d.) vol. 3, pp. 26-27.

II. HIS LIFE AND THE INFLUENCES ON IT

His lineage and family

The suffix Nadwī, attached to the name of Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan, is not his family name. It indicates his association with Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ, from where he graduated.[4] His lineage[5] is among the noblest because it goes back to the Seal of the Messengers ﷺ and, through the lineage of ᶜAlī ibn ᵓAbī Ṭālib, to the Prophets ᵓIsmāᶜīl and ᵓIbrāhīm, "When his Lord (*rabb*) tested ᵓIbrāhīm with some words and he completed them, God said, 'I am going to make you a leader for the people.' He said, 'And of my descendants?' God said, 'My covenant does not include the wrongdoers'" (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2: 124). This verse confirms God's conferring leadership on ᵓIbrāhīm and on his descendants excluding the wrongdoers among them. The verse is explained by the *ḥadīth*

[4] Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Ṭanṭāwī writes in the Preface to *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, "I assumed that 'Nadwī' was the name of a family and that it was a lineage which brought members of this family together. I wondered about the relationship between Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, one of the greatest authors on the life of God's Messenger ﷺ, Sayyid Masᶜūd Nadwī, the editor of *al-Ḍiyāᵓ*, one of the Arabic ᵓIslāmic magazines and Sayyid ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī. I then learnt that it was not lineage but knowledge and literature which linked them. It referred to this institute to which they were affiliated. I do not know of any graduates or students who are as attached to their institution or school as the Nadwīyīn are attached to their Nadwah. They name themselves after it and not after their forefathers. They link themselves to it more than members of a family link themselves to their lineage. So each person who gains admission to this institution carries the title *Nadwī*. He is known by this title and not by the name of his family."

[5] On his father's side: ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī ibn ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy ibn Fakhr al-Dīn ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī ibn ᶜAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ᵓAkbar Shāh ibn Muḥammad Shāh ibn Muḥammad Taqī ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Hidāyat ᵓAllāh ibn Isḥāq ibn Muḥammad Muᶜazẓam ibn al-Qāḍī ᵓAḥmad ibn al-Qāḍī Maḥmūd ibn al-Qāḍī ᶜAlāᵓ al-Dīn ibn al-ᵓAmīr Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Thānī ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn ibn Zayn al-Dīn ibn ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜAlī ibn Qiyām al-Dīn ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn ibn al-Qāḍī Rukn al-Dīn ibn al-ᵓAmīr Niẓām al-Dīn ibn Shaykh al-ᵓIslām al-ᵓAmīr Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Madanī ibn Rashīd al-Dīn ᵓAḥmad ibn Yūsuf ibn ᶜĪsā ibn Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn ibn Jaᶜfar ibn Qāsim ibn ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah ibn ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh al-Maḥd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ᶜAlī and Fāṭimah ﷺ al-Ḥasanī al-ᶜAlawī al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī.

And his lineage on his mother's side: Khayr al-Nisāᵓ the daughter of the great scholar Ḍiyāᵓ al-Nabī ibn Saᶜīd al-Dīn ibn Ghulām Jīlānī ibn Muḥammad Wāḍiḥ ibn Muḥammad Ṣābir ibn ᵓĀyat ᵓAllāh, the son of the great scholar ᶜAlam ᵓAllāh ibn Muḥammad Fuḍayl ibn Muḥammad Muᶜazẓam, in whom the paternal and maternal lines of Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan's family meet.

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Shaykh Nadwī's Arab ancestors belonged to a family of well-preserved lineage, which excelled in scholarship, service to the Sharīᶜah, dissemination of ʾIslāmic knowledge and the good of the Muslims. The first among his Arab ancestors to come to India was **Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Madanī** (1771-1861/1185-1278 AH, nephew, sister's son, of ʾImām ᶜAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī). He studied under his learned father and also under Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Razzāq ibn ᶜAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Shaykh Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā, and other great scholars. He left Baghdad with a group of his companions at the time of the Mongol depredations in the early seventh century AH. He settled in Ghaznah for some time before coming to India, most probably during the rule of Sulṭān Quṭb al-Dīn ʾAybak. He held the post of Shaykh al-ʾIslām in Delhi for some time. He then went out on *jihād* campaigns, achieved some successes and called to ʾIslām. He trained a large number of people in sound ʾIslāmic beliefs, knowledge, good conduct and *daᶜwah*. He lived in Kara Manikpur and some of his family members settled down in Naṣīrābād.[7]

The family of ʾAmīr Quṭb al-Dīn Madanī were blessed after him by many scholars who carried the torch of *daᶜwah* and led ʾIslāmic movements in different times. Among them was the great scholar **ᶜAlam ʾAllāh Barilwī** (1623-85/1033-96 AH) who studied under his cousin, ʾAḥmad ibn ʾIsḥāq al-Ḥasanī Naṣīrābādī, and was trained in the Naqshabandī discipline under Shaykh ʾĀdam ibn ʾIsmāᶜīl al-Ḥusaynī al-Binnawrī. He moved from Naṣīrābād and settled in the outskirts of Raebareli, on the bank of the river Sai, at a place known as Takiyah Kalān. In 1673/1084 AH he built a *masjid* there, without dome or minaret, which also served as a fortified retreat (*ribāṭ*), *madrasah*, centre of *daᶜwah*, and training ground for *jihad*, which still stands to this day. The emperor of India at the time, Alamgir ibn Shāh Jahān, Aurangzeb, the ruler of India, offered him land grants (*iqṭaᶜ*) but he refused them, preferring his life of poverty. He was an ascetic who contented himself with the minimum, was strict in religious observance and generous in giving to others. The light of faith (*ʾīmān*) and a lifetime of virtue deepened the charm of his famously handsome features. He excelled in the sciences of the Sharīᶜah and in knowledge of God (*maᶜrifah*). He did not retreat from the duty to bid people to good and forbid them from evil -

[6] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ʾAḥkām*, b. *al-ʾUmarāʾ min Quraysh*.
[7] See ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir* (Hyderabad: Osmania Oriental Publication Bureau, 8 vols., n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 211-12.

he would take to task whoever acted against the *Sharīᶜah*, irrespective of whether the person was a powerful ruler, renowned scholar or revered shaykh. He vigorously refuted and exposed the follies of those who innovated religious practices (*ʾAhl al-Bidᶜah*). His grave is well known, near his *khānqah* outside the town of Raebareli.[8]

Among his descendants was **Sayyid ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜIrfān Shahīd**, the leader of the largest *daᶜwah* movement in the history of ʾIslām in India. He founded a short-lived ʾIslāmic government in the North-West Frontier Province of India, brought down by the conspiracies and military power of the British. He was martyred in the battle of Balakot on 6th May 1831 (24th Dhū al-Qaᶜdah 1246 AH). His life and influence will be presented in more detail under *Influences on his intellectual development*.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's paternal grandfather, **Sayyid Fakhr al-Dīn ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī al-Ḥasanī**, was born in 1840/1256 AH in the *khānqah* of Shaykh ᶜAlam ʾAllāh Naqshabandī in Raebareli. He learnt to recite the Qurʾān, studied Persian and Urdu, and ʾIslāmic science under various *ᶜulamāʾ*. He studied *fiqh* under Shaykh Muḥammad Naᶜīm ibn ᶜAbd al-Ḥakīm al-ʾAnṣārī Lakhnawī. Sayyid Khawājah ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad Yāsīn Naṣīrābādī authorised him to narrate all of his narrations - both verbal and written; as did Shaykh Sakhāwat ᶜAlī al-ᶜUmarī Jawnpūrī, Shaykh Yaᶜqūb ibn Muḥammad ʾAfḍal Dihlawī (grandson of Shaykh ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz ibn Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī), Sayyid Muḥammad ibn Alī Shāh Naṣīrābādī, and other *ᶜulamāʾ* and *shuyūkh*. He became head of the madrasah run by the state of Hyderabad. He lived in Bhopal and then for some time at Ṭonk. Of excellent character, he was by temperament ascetic, disliked vain formalities, and kept himself engrossed in his duties. Through his constant yearning for the hereafter, he was able to keep his heart humble and pure, and patient in the face of the vicissitudes of life. Among the books he wrote are: *Mihri Jahān Tab* (3 volumes in Persian) on different branches of knowledge and biographies, *Siyar al-Sādāt*, on the genealogies of *sādāt* and noblemen, *Sīrah Shaykh ᶜAlam al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī* (in Persian), and a collection of poetry (in Urdu). He became ill towards the latter part of his life and passed away on 6th October 1908 (10th Ramaḍān 1326 AH) and was buried in the graveyard of his forefathers in the *khānqah* of Shaykh ᶜAlam ʾAllāh al-Ḥasanī.[9]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's maternal grandfather was the great scholar **Sharīf Ḍiyāʾ al-Nabī ibn Saᶜīd al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī Naqshabandī Barilwī**. He was born in 1827/1243 AH and grew up in the devout and chaste environment of the *khānqah* of his grandfather, Sayyid ᶜAlam ʾAllāh in Raebareli. When he was older he continued his studies in Delhi under Shaykh ʾAḥmad ibn ʾAbī Saᶜīd, his brother ᶜAbd al-Ghanī ibn ʾAbī Saᶜīd al-ᶜUmarī Dihlawī and

[8] *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 301-03.
[9] *Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 376-80.

which ʾImām al-Bukhārī narrates in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Muᶜāwiyah ibn ʾAbī Sufyān who said, "I heard God's Messenger ﷺ say, 'This leadership shall remain among the Quraysh. Anyone who disputes with them in this regard, God will most certainly cast him upon his face in the Fire. This is provided they uphold the religion.'"[6] The precondition is indeed important, namely that they uphold the religion.

Shaykh Nadwī's Arab ancestors belonged to a family of well-preserved lineage, which excelled in scholarship, service to the Sharīᶜah, dissemination of ʾIslāmic knowledge and the good of the Muslims. The first among his Arab ancestors to come to India was **Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Madanī** (1771-1861/1185-1278 AH, nephew, sister's son, of ʾImām ᶜAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī). He studied under his learned father and also under Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Razzāq ibn ᶜAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Shaykh Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā, and other great scholars. He left Baghdad with a group of his companions at the time of the Mongol depredations in the early seventh century AH. He settled in Ghaznah for some time before coming to India, most probably during the rule of Sulṭān Quṭb al-Dīn ʾAybak. He held the post of Shaykh al-ʾIslām in Delhi for some time. He then went out on *jihād* campaigns, achieved some successes and called to ʾIslām. He trained a large number of people in sound ʾIslāmic beliefs, knowledge, good conduct and *daᶜwah*. He lived in Kara Manikpur and some of his family members settled down in Naṣīrābād.[7]

The family of ʾAmīr Quṭb al-Dīn Madanī were blessed after him by many scholars who carried the torch of *daᶜwah* and led ʾIslāmic movements in different times. Among them was the great scholar **ᶜAlam ʾAllāh Barilwī** (1623-85/1033-96 AH) who studied under his cousin, ʾAḥmad ibn ʾIsḥāq al-Ḥasanī Naṣīrābādī, and was trained in the Naqshabandī discipline under Shaykh ʾĀdam ibn ʾIsmāᶜīl al-Ḥusaynī al-Binnawrī. He moved from Naṣīrābād and settled in the outskirts of Raebareli, on the bank of the river Sai, at a place known as Takiyah Kalān. In 1673/1084 AH he built a *masjid* there, without dome or minaret, which also served as a fortified retreat (*ribāṭ*), *madrasah*, centre of *daᶜwah*, and training ground for *jihad*, which still stands to this day. The emperor of India at the time, Alamgir ibn Shāh Jahān, Aurangzeb, the ruler of India, offered him land grants (*iqṭaᶜ*) but he refused them, preferring his life of poverty. He was an ascetic who contented himself with the minimum, was strict in religious observance and generous in giving to others. The light of faith (*ʾīmān*) and a lifetime of virtue deepened the charm of his famously handsome features. He excelled in the sciences of the Sharīᶜah and in knowledge of God (*maᶜrifah*). He did not retreat from the duty to bid people to good and forbid them from evil -

[6] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ʾAḥkām*, b. *al-ʾUmarāʾ min Quraysh*.
[7] See ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir* (Hyderabad: Osmania Oriental Publication Bureau, 8 vols., n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 211-12.

he would take to task whoever acted against the *Sharīᶜah*, irrespective of whether the person was a powerful ruler, renowned scholar or revered shaykh. He vigorously refuted and exposed the follies of those who innovated religious practices (*ʾAhl al-Bidᶜah*). His grave is well known, near his *khānqah* outside the town of Raebareli.[8]

Among his descendants was **Sayyid ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜIrfān Shahīd**, the leader of the largest *daᶜwah* movement in the history of ʾIslām in India. He founded a short-lived ʾIslāmic government in the North-West Frontier Province of India, brought down by the conspiracies and military power of the British. He was martyred in the battle of Balakot on 6th May 1831 (24th Dhū al-Qaᶜdah 1246 AH). His life and influence will be presented in more detail under *Influences on his intellectual development*.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's paternal grandfather, **Sayyid Fakhr al-Dīn ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī al-Ḥasanī**, was born in 1840/1256 AH in the *khānqah* of Shaykh ᶜAlam ʾAllāh Naqshabandī in Raebareli. He learnt to recite the Qurʾān, studied Persian and Urdu, and ʾIslāmic science under various *ᶜulamāʾ*. He studied *fiqh* under Shaykh Muḥammad Naᶜīm ibn ᶜAbd al-Ḥakīm al-ʾAnṣārī Lakhnawī. Sayyid Khawājah ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad Yāsīn Naṣīrābādī authorised him to narrate all of his narrations - both verbal and written; as did Shaykh Sakhāwat ᶜAlī al-ᶜUmarī Jawnpūrī, Shaykh Yaᶜqūb ibn Muḥammad ʾAfḍal Dihlawī (grandson of Shaykh ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz ibn Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī), Sayyid Muḥammad ibn Alī Shāh Naṣīrābādī, and other *ᶜulamāʾ* and *shuyūkh*. He became head of the madrasah run by the state of Hyderabad. He lived in Bhopal and then for some time at Ṭonk. Of excellent character, he was by temperament ascetic, disliked vain formalities, and kept himself engrossed in his duties. Through his constant yearning for the hereafter, he was able to keep his heart humble and pure, and patient in the face of the vicissitudes of life. Among the books he wrote are: *Mihri Jahān Tab* (3 volumes in Persian) on different branches of knowledge and biographies, *Siyar al-Sādāt*, on the genealogies of *sādāt* and noblemen, *Sīrah Shaykh ᶜAlam al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī* (in Persian), and a collection of poetry (in Urdu). He became ill towards the latter part of his life and passed away on 6th October 1908 (10th Ramaḍān 1326 AH) and was buried in the graveyard of his forefathers in the *khānqah* of Shaykh ᶜAlam ʾAllāh al-Ḥasanī.[9]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's maternal grandfather was the great scholar **Sharīf Ḍiyāʾ al-Nabī ibn Saᶜīd al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī Naqshabandī Barilwī**. He was born in 1827/1243 AH and grew up in the devout and chaste environment of the *khānqah* of his grandfather, Sayyid ᶜAlam ʾAllāh in Raebareli. When he was older he continued his studies in Delhi under Shaykh ʾAḥmad ibn ʾAbī Saᶜīd, his brother ᶜAbd al-Ghanī ibn ʾAbī Saᶜīd al-ᶜUmarī Dihlawī and

[8] *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 301-03.
[9] *Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 376-80.

other scholars. He treaded the *Ṣūfī* path under Sayyid Sharīf Khawājah ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad Yāsīn Naṣīrābādī and remained in the company of Khawājah Fayḍ ʾAllāh Aurangābādī Lakhnawī. He travelled to Ḥijāz to perform pilgrimage and visited Madīnah. When he arrived, many people turned to him for religious guidance. He devoted himself heart and soul to the remembrance of God, and found perfect solace in *ṣalāh* and listening to the Qurʾān, which, it is reported he stood for the whole night in *ṣalāh*. He was not concerned about anything except ʾIslām and preparation for the hereafter. He was strict in following the Sunnah and intensely abhorred innovations in religion. He passed away on 19th December 1908 (15th Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1326 AH). He was buried in the graveyard of his forefathers, north-west of the Masjid.[10]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's father was the famous *ḥadīth* scholar, historian of India, and physician, **Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī**. He was born on 22nd December 1869 (18th Ramaḍān 1286 AH). He joined the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ movement and remained absorbed by it, serving as its rector to the end of his life. He was a critical, open-minded scholar and reformer, whose alertness to the demands and challenges of his time was balanced by steadfast loyalty to the past of which he was the heir. Through his personality and his writings he was a major formative influence on the people of his time. In particular, he was a fundamental pillar of the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ movement, which, under his guidance, produced scholars and litterateurs able to add to the treasure of ʾIslāmic sciences in Arabic and Urdu. They also established an academy, Dār al-Muṣannifīn, and composed books which achieved international popularity.

Of the many beneficial works that Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī himself wrote, the most important is the eight-volume biographical dictionary of Indian personalities, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir wa Bahjat al-Masāmiʿ wa al-Nawāẓir*. This unique work, through the biographies of around 5000 scholars, *Ṣūfī shuyūkh*, kings, rulers, poets and others, presents a history of the Indian subcontinent from the time ʾIslām entered it in the first century AH up to the fourteenth century. I have had the opportunity to consult many reference works on the academic and cultural history of Muslims in India but I have not come across one that comes even close to this book in thoroughness, comprehensiveness, authenticity and paucity of mistakes. He deserves to be recognised as the Ibn Khallikān[11] of India.

He also wrote (and also in Arabic) *al-Thaqāfah al-ʾIslāmiyyah fī al-Hind, al-Hind fī al-ʿAhd al-ʾIslāmī*, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, *al-Qānūn fī ʾIntifāʿ*

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 214-18.

[11] Shams al-Dīn ʾAbū al-ʿAbbās ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khallikān (1211-82/607-80 AH), he was originally from Iraq and was the author of the famous biographical work, *Wafayāt al-ʾAʿyān wa ʾAbnā al-Zamān*.

al-Murtahin bi al-Marhūn, *al-Ghināʾ wa Hukmuhu fī al-Sharʿ*. Among other major works are his *Yād ʾAyyām* on the history of the state of Gujarat, and *Gul Rānā* (The Graceful Rose), a history of Urdu poetry, which is still taught in several universities. In addition, he wrote several booklets in Urdu on religious education and reform of character and society, among them, *ʾIṣlāḥ*, on maintaining ties of kinship, and a number of books for Muslim children, such as *Taʿlīm al-ʾIslām*, *Nūr al-ʾĪmān* and others. May God reward him well for his contribution to ʾIslām and aiding the Muslims.

Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī's highest merit was his excellence in the sciences of *ḥadīth* and knowledge of the narrators, especially latter-day narrators. His book, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, bears testimony to this. When he writes on the lives of the *ʿulamāʾ*, he distinguishes in careful detail the *ʾaḥādīth* that they 'heard' and those that they 'read', their *asānīd*, and the authorisations to narrate granted to them. He himself had permission to narrate *ʾaḥadīth* from the senior scholars of his time, his highest *sanad* was from ʾImām Faḍl Raḥmān Ganj Murādābādī, who narrated directly from the ʾImām of India, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Dihlawī. From among his other lofty chains was his narration from Ḥusayn ibn Muḥsin al-ʾAnṣārī, Sayyid Nadhīr Ḥusayn Dihlawī, Qāri ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Pānīpatī and other senior scholars of his time.[12]

He was in charge of teaching Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, literature and medicine, but in the later years of his life he gave up teaching literature and medicine. He continued teaching *ḥadīth* until his death on Friday 2nd February 1923 (15th Jumādā ʾĀkhar 1341 AH).

He married Sayyidah Zaynab, the daughter of his maternal uncle, Sayyid ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Sirāj al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī Wāsiṭī, in 1891/1308 AH. She passed away ten years later leaving just one child, who would be the famous doctor ʿAbd al-ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī, the brother of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. In 1904/1321 AH he married Khayr al-Nisāʾ bint Sayyid Ḍiyāʾ al-Nabī al-Ḥasanī, the mother of ʾAbū al-Ḥasan and of his two sisters, Sayyidah Amat al-ʿAzīz and Sayyidah Amat ʾAllāh ʿĀʾishah.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's mother**, Sayyidah Khayr al-Nisāʾ bint Ḍiyāʾ al-Nabī al-Ḥasanī**, was born in 1878/1295 AH. Amongst other subjects, she studied the Qurʾān and its meaning in Urdu with her father. She memorised the Qurʾān and was particularly attentive in her studies. Among the books she constantly referred to were *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ*, *Maqāṣid al-Ṣāliḥīn*, *Maʾāthir*

[12] Despite extensive research, I have not found any *ʾijāzah* granted by Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī to his children. I asked Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan about this and he denied that his father granted him authority to narrate from him. However, granting such authority to one's own children if they are competent, is a known practice of *ḥadīth* scholars in general, and so I have not abandoned my search.

al-Ṣāliḥīn, Ṭarīq al-Najāh, al-Dāʾwah al-Dawāʾ of Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, and *Taʿbīr al-Ruʾyā* (commonly attributed to Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn).

She was most regular in performing the *tahajjud* and *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh* in the assembly of women. She was self-disciplined, virtuous, pious, patient and persevering in turning to God, and found great contentment in supplicating to Him. Many of her books have been published, including two collections of poetry, one of poems of supplication titled *Bāb al-Raḥmah*, and another of poems in praise of God's Messenger ﷺ titled *Miftāḥ Bāb al-Raḥmah*. Her books on the education of women and children include *al-Dhāʾiqah*, *Ḥusn al-Muʿāsharah* and *al-Duʿāʾ wa al-Qadar*. She performed the pilgrimage in 1947/1366 AH and lived in close proximity to Makkah and Madīnah for around six months, engaged in worship and devotion. She died on 1st September 1968 (7th Jumādā ʾĀkhar 1388 AH).[13]

She was very conscientious in the religious upbringing of her children. Shaykh Nadwī recalls, "When I began acquiring knowledge and writing, my mother advised me to begin everything I write with the words: *Bism ʾAllāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm. ʾAllāhumma ʾātinī bi faḍlik ʾafḍal mā tuʾtī ʿibādak al-Ṣāliḥīn,* 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. O God, grant to me by Your grace the best of what You grant to Your righteous slaves.' That remained my habit and practice for a long time. I still remember these righteous words on numerous occasions."[14]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's elder brother and famous physician **Sayyid ʿAbd al-ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī** was born in 1893/1310 AH. He was a diligent student of Persian, Arabic literature and religious sciences including *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*. He also studied logic, philosophy, astronomy and Euclidean geometry. He went on to graduate in medicine from Lucknow University and became a proficient doctor. He served as a principal of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ and then as its rector from 1931/1349 AH until his death on 7th May 1961 (21st Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1380 AH).

Ever since childhood he was known for being silent for long periods, preoccupied and earnest in all matters, and keeping away from pleasantries and vain pastimes. He was considered a model in respect of obedience to his

[13] ʾUstādh ʾAḥmad al-Shirbāṣī wrote in his introduction to ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn* (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-ʿĀlam li al-Kitāb al-ʾIslāmī, 4th edn. n.d.), p. 18, "His mother was from among the most superior and most righteous women. She memorised the Qurʾān and wrote and compiled books." My teacher, Muḥammad al-Rābiʿ al-Ḥasanī Nadwī, held a similarly high opinion of her, "She possessed excellent qualities. She was a litterateuse, a poet, and fully conversant with the upbringing of children in religious righteousness, piety and worship, in which she distinguished herself among members of her family." See also *Majallāt al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 147.

[14] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1987), vol. 1, p. 75.

father, and being solicitous for his comfort. He combined a strong grasp of the principals of faith (al-ʿ*Aqīdah*) and steadfastness in religion with proficiency in both ancient and modern sciences. He was broad-minded, willing to learn from experience and to embrace recent discoveries and inventions. He saw no necessary contradiction between science and religion, ancient and modern, or East and West.

In his personal conduct he was very self-disciplined, erudite and cultured with an enlightened perspective on intellectual and ʾIslāmic matters. He had an intense love for God, His Messenger ﷺ, his family and people, his language and homeland, and for the dignity and sanctity of his religion. He was strict in confining himself to the limits and textual sources of ʾIslām, and strongly disliked beliefs, philosophies, ideologies and actions that conflicted with his profound understanding of the religion. Nevertheless, he was flexible in matters where flexibility was permitted.[15]

After the death of his father, he took on the responsibility of his younger brother's upbringing. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan says:

> I was raised by him and under his supervision. My father, God have mercy on him, passed away when I was nine years old. My brother then brought me up and was a fatherly figure to me. He was, may God shower His mercy on him and recompense him with the best recompense, affectionate and beneficent, and a wise tutor, the best tutor I ever came across. He was the one who planned my education and culturing, which I followed throughout my life. He instilled in me love for sensibility and decorum, justice and balance, combining the good of the ancient with the beneficial of the modern, having love for the predecessors, respecting the Sunnah, and abstaining from excesses and shortcomings. It was through him that God provided for me the means for my education and studies, for whatever services to knowledge and religion were decreed for me, for devoting myself to them and freeing me from the concerns and responsibilities of life.
>
> His calm and composed assemblies, his wise directives, and his serene teaching were far more beneficial to me than a hundred books. They had the merit of making me understand the superiority of ʾIslāmic teachings, the civilisation which these teachings founded, and which also identify the weaknesses found in Western civilisation and its warped foundation. If there is anything worthy of mention in my education, studies, writings, *daʿwah* and counselling that God inspired me to do, then the merit of all these go to my brother through the power of God.[16]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's elder sister, **Sayyidah ʾAmat al-ʿAzīz bint ʿAbd al-Ḥayy** was born in 1906/1323 AH. She was a devout, virtuous woman and a scholar, who wrote a study of the life of God's Messenger ﷺ and several popular booklets, the most important of which are *Sīrah Umm*

[15] Muḥammad al-Ḥasanī, *al-ʾIslām al-Mumtaḥan* (Cairo; al-Mukhtār al-ʾIslāmī, 1977), p. 11.

[16] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), pp. 90-91.

al-Muʾminīn Khadījah and *Sīrah ʾAsmāʾ bint al-Ṣiddīq*. She had four children: **Shaykh Sayyid Maḥmūd Ḥasan**. **Shaykh Sayyid Muḥammad al-Thānī**, a poet and the author, among other works, of a biography of the leader of the Tablīghī Jamāᶜah, *Sīrah al-Shaykh Muḥammad Yūsuf Kāndhalawī*, and another of the author of *Badhl al-Majhūd fī Sharḥ Sunan ʾAbī Dāwūd*, *Sīrah al-ᶜAllāmah Khalīl ʾAḥmad Sahāranpūrī*. **Shaykh Sayyid Muḥammad al-Rābiᶜ al-Ḥasanī**, the present rector of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, Secretary of the ʾIslāmic Academy, and Deputy Head of the International League of ʾIslāmic Literature. **ʾUstādh Muḥammad Wāḍiḥ Rashīd Nadwī**, the editor of the Arabic newspaper, *al-Rāʾid*. The two last mentioned were both my teachers.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's second sister, **Sayyidah ʾAmat ʾAllāh Tasnīm**, also known by the name **ᶜĀʾishah**, was the learned author, among other works, of *Zād Safar*, an Urdu translation of *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* and a standard text in ʾIslāmic schools in India. She wrote her supplications and prayers in the form of poetry in *Mawj Tasnīm*, and she was the editor of the periodical, *Riḍwān*, a magazine written in Urdu for Muslim women in India. She passed away in 1976/1395 AH. Shaykh Nadwī performed the *janāzah ṣalāh* and she was buried in the graveyard of the *khānqah* of Sayyid ᶜAlam ʾAllāh.

In 1943/1362 AH his mother arranged his marriage to Sayyidah Ṭayyib al-Nisāʾ. She was the daughter of her brother, Sayyid ʾAḥmad Saᶜd al-Ḥasanī ibn Shaykh Sayyid Ḍiyāʾ al-Nabī al-Ḥasanī. Dr ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī al-Ḥasanī, ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's brother, took great care over the arrangements. He invited ᶜAllāmah Muḥaddith Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān al-Ṭonkī to preside over the ceremony, and he organised a large *walīmah* (post-wedding feast from the groom's side) lest his brother should feel the absence of his father. It was a joyous occasion.

Sayyidah Ṭayyib was ardent and devout in worship, she was very generous in disposition and constantly beseeched God in supplication. She was very particular about *ṣalāh* and most conscientious in serving her husband until, after a protracted illness, she passed away on 15th December 1989 (16th Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1410 AH). Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan led her *janāzah ṣalāh* in front of a huge assembly of people.

God did not bestow children on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. However, he blessed him with nephews, on his brother's side, the author and *dāᶜī*, Muḥammad al-Ḥasanī; on his sister's side, the righteous and sincere *duᶜāt*, Muḥammad al-Thānī, Muḥammad al-Rābiᶜ and Muḥammad al-Khāmis also known by the name Muḥammad Wāḍiḥ Rashīd. Moreover, God recompensed the Shaykh in the books that He ﷻ enabled him to write. Ibn al-Jawzī said, "The book written by a scholar is his eternal child." In that sense, there were many beloved and beneficial children of Shaykh Nadwī.

His birth and upbringing

Shaykh Nadwī was born in Raebareli on 24th November 1914 (6th Muḥarram 1333 AH). His first years were spent in an environment of calling people to the Oneness of God and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger ﷺ, far removed from innovations in religion. It was an environment where the highest value was placed upon knowledge of ʾIslām, and upon virtue, piety, worship, spiritual exertion, simplicity and contentment, sacrifice and *jihād* in the cause of God. Around him the Qurʾān was continually recited, *ḥadīth* discussed, jurisprudence taught, and memories of the *jihād* of ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜIrfān Shahīd told and re-told. Then, there was the history of his distinguished family's contribution to *daᶜwah* and *jihād* over the ages. The narrative of battles in the form of poetry adapted by members of his family from ʾImām Wāqidī's *Futūḥ al-Shām* would have been recited to him. So too, stirring accounts of the life of God's Messenger ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ, the virtues of ʾIslāmic civilisation, its uplifting of humanity, and the role of the Arabs in the construction of the modern world. All of this was absorbed into his mind and spirit and formed the bedrock of his person and character. He loved the Messenger of God ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ to such an extent that nothing that he met in later life could ever strip him of it. It was this love that was the permanent source of his inspiration, of his *ʾīmān* and of his compassion and dedication as a teacher.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan learnt to recite the Qurʾān under Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Saᶜīd, the ʾImām of the *masjid* in Muḥammad ᶜAlī Lane, Lucknow. He studied the prescribed Urdu texts of Muḥammad ʾIsmāᶜīl Mīrutī, and a primer of Persian language, under Shaykh Maḥmūd ᶜAlī. At this time, he also studied *Taᶜlīm al-ʾIslām* and *Nūr al-ʾĪmān*, both written by his father. After the latter's death in 1922/1340 AH, he resumed Persian, studying the *Bustān* of Shaykh Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Saᶜdī Shīrāzī under Shaykh Sayyid Muḥammad ʾIsmāᶜīl. He studied Urdu and arithmetic under ʾUstādh Muḥammad Zamān in Raebareli. His mother supervised his memorization of *al-Ṭiwāl al-Mufaṣṣal* (the portion of the Qurʾān from *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt* to *Sūrat al-Inshiqāq*). On his own he studied *Sīrah Khayr al-Bashar* and *Raḥmat li al-ᶜĀlamīn* by Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaymān Manṣūrpūrī.

His father was most affectionate to him, sharing meals with him and taking Shaykh Nadwī with him when visiting friends. After Shaykh Nadwī's father died, his mother's love, affection and compassion towards him increased. She paid particular attention to his education and upbringing. She habituated him to show respect to elders, affection to youngsters, and to be regular in performing the *ṣalāh*. She made many supplications to God in his favour, which had a great impact on his life, guiding him to what she had desired for him, a life of virtue, learning and the service of others.

Shaykh Nadwī relates an incident from his boyhood, which reveals much about the aspirations (at an age when most children are soley concerned with toys and games) that his environment and early upbringing had settled in him:

> My elder brother took charge of my upbringing and culturing after the death of my father, who passed away when I was nine years old. He was totally inspired in choosing books that I should study during childhood. Among the first books that he presented to me was *Sīrah Khayr al-Bashar*, which was written by an Indian author. My brother was most desirous of my studying books on the life of the Messenger of God ﷺ because he knew that it had the greatest impact in developing one's character, beliefs, manners, and embedding *ʾīmān* in a person. I therefore grew up with a love for books of biographies, and the extreme desire to acquire and study them.
>
> My gaze once fell on a book called *Raḥmat li al-ʿĀlamīn*. I was in the habit of constantly looking at book lists and advertisements for books. I sent an order for this book of which two volumes had already been printed. My small allowance, at a time when I was just ten or eleven years old, did not permit me to purchase this book. But small children, especially of the age about which I am speaking, do not submit to the laws of arithmetic and knowledge of economy. They merely follow their instincts and emotions.
>
> The postman came carrying this book together with all the other post for our small village. I realised that I did not have the required amount of money to take receipt of this book. My mother, despite her desire to please her fatherless child, excused herself, may God bless her life, from paying the money because she did not have such an amount at the time.
>
> I realised that I had no supporter or intercessor to help me in this matter except the intercessor to whom children constantly resort and know that his intercession is not refused. It was that very intercessor to whom the little ʿUmayr ibn ʾAbī Waqqāṣ resorted and God's Messenger ﷺ accepted his intercession and permitted him to fight in the battle of Badr That intercessor is tearfulness and plain crying which is still accepted and listened to by God and and His righteous servants.
>
> This is what happened and the heart of my affectionate mother softened to it. She made efforts to pay for the book and acquire it. It is thus I got hold of the book.[17]

Higher studies

In order to better supervise the continuation of his young brother's studies, Dr ʿAbd al-ʿAlī moved him to Lucknow. This city had long been a major centre of ʾIslāmic civilisation and was the seat of the famed *madrasah*, Firangī Maḥal, which had served ʾIslāmic sciences for more than two hundred years training *ʾAʾimmah*, *ḥadīth* scholars and jurists like ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Firangī Maḥallī. Lucknow eventually became the centre for the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ movement. The city was also home to a family closely linked to that of Shaykh

[17] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Madīnah* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿIlmī, 2004), pp. 15-17.

ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, Nawāb Sayyid Ẓuhūr Ḥasan and ʾAmīr Sayyid Najm al-Ḥasan, two grandsons of Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, the author of many popular books, who insisted that the two brothers move into their palatial home. They did so and stayed for two years until Dr ʿAbd al-ʿAlī was able to rent a house for himself and the young ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. During this time he studied *Uṣūl Fārisī* by ʿAllāmah Fārūq Chirayyakotī, the final Persian text books he had worked on, and learnt the basics of the English language from his brother ʿAbd al-ʿAlī, Khalīl al-Dīn Hansawwī, and his maternal uncle, Sayyid Saʿīd ʾAḥmad al-Ḥasanī. Living in a palace proved a beneficial expereince for him, in that it forever wiped his heart clean of any awe before the display of material wealth.

It was most fortunate that the brothers' rented home was next to the house of ʿAllāmah Khalīl ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-Yamānī, a lecturer at Lucknow University in Arabic language and literature. On his brother's instruction, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, then twelve, began studying Arabic under Shaykh Khalīl. He memorised many examples of Arabic prose in these lessons, which remained with him, shaping the taste and style of his future writings. He recalls:

> I think it was in 1926/1344 AH when I commenced studying Arabic in the house in which he lived. He would write the elementary lesson of morphology (*ṣarf*) in a notebook and ask me to memorize it. I was the only student in this class. After a few days he began teaching me the book *al-Muṭālaʿah al-ʿArabiyyah* (though its original name was *al-Muṭālaʿah al-Miṣriyyah*). Shaykh Khalīl was passionately fond of this book because it was distinguished by its simple language, flowing style, enjoyable conversations, and unique arrangement. It went through many impressions and gained wide acceptance in the ʾIslāmic schools, through the efforts and attention that Shaykh Khalīl gave to its dissemination.[18]

After a few days he found a distinguished classmate, namely Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad, the youngest brother of Shaykh Khalīl. He had started studying Arabic a short time before. They were the only students in the class, so the study was very concentrated and enjoyable, as Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan recalls, "Many days passed and I remember that I never experienced any boredom nor vexation from his lessons, due to his captivating speech, his encouraging and sweet humour, and his light-heartedness which removed from me the strangeness of a foreign language and the difficulty of the text books."[19]

Shaykh Khalīl delighted in captivating words and expressions, and passed on that delight to his students, and so he rejoiced in holding them in his memory. Shaykh Khalīl also impressed upon him that these literary treasures were not private property, but collectively owned by whoever was able to use them in a correct and appropriate manner. He was generous with joy and admiration when students correctly recorded in their composition books an

[18] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 101-02.
[19] *Ibid.*

expression, saying or sentence, sometimes even rewarding them with a prize.[20] It was only much later that Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan perceived the value and wisdom of Shaykh Khalīl's teaching method:

> We continued studying the Arabic language in this manner without perceiving the importance and value of the method that Shaykh Khalīl followed. But I later realised that it was a superior method based on long teaching experience, enabling great success which could not be acquired through any another method. He would never mix two languages. In fact, he would not even mix two different subjects at the same time. Since we commenced studying Arabic language and Arabic literature, we devoted ourselves for two years to studying the rules of grammar morphology, and literature, together with writing practice and composition. This was our greatest desire and our main capital. Expertise, proficiency and talent in this study was the greatest success and loftiest honour for us. Consequently, our major efforts and endeavours were confined to attaining success and flair in this subject. We would speak to him in Arabic, think in Arabic, and write in Arabic. This was the world in which we lived.[21]

After the completion of intermediate books of Arabic literature, Shaykh Khalīl began teaching his student some of the Qurʾān, especially those sections related to *tawḥīd* (oneness of God). Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan studied *Sūrat al-Zumar* and several *suwar* after it. Alongside this, he studied *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* (the Book of Battles) in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of ʾImām Muslim, a subject in which Shaykh Khalīl had a special interest.

Shaykh Khalīl also taught him the history of Arabic, and read several books of Arabic language and literature with his students. In poetry, he taught the *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah* of ʾAbū Tammām, *Lāmiyah al-ʿArab* of al-Shanfarī, the collection titled *Bānat Suʿād* and *Saqṭ al-Zand* of ʾAbū al-ʾAʿlāʾ al-Maʿarrī. In prose, Shaykh Khalīl was a great admirer of the letters in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. He was not drawn to the speeches because those attributed to ʿAlīʾ are by and large exaggerated and many statements are wrongly attributed to him. However the letters offered fine examples of the different styles and modes of expression in prose. The *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī* was not among the books that Shaykh Khalīl liked. Its ornate rhymed prose did not appeal to him. Nevertheless, he taught twenty sections of the book on account of its linguistic treasures and advised his students to read the valuable commentary by al-Sharīshī.

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[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 103-04.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 104. When Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan travelled to Egypt in 1951/1370 AH, ʿAllāmah Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, who held a senior post at al-ʾAzhar and later became its Shaykh, wanted to know how he had studied Arabic in a non-Arab country, far away from the centre of Arabic, well enough to realise his intellectual and religious objectives. Shaykh Nadwī writes, "When I informed him of the method that Shaykh Khalīl adopted in teaching us and mentioned that I used to study just one topic at a time and I was thus safe from getting confused between different topics (as opposed to the present system in all schools and educational institutes, old or modern) he said to me with much emotion and fervour, 'This is the most superior method of teaching.'" *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Shaykh Khalīl was captivated by the writings of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, the purity of his Arabic and his fine, penetrating insights. He taught *Dalāʾil al-ʾIʿjāz*, his favourite, to Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. Sometimes ecstatic with delight, he would repeat a verse over and over, relishing it just as though he were eating delicious food. He acknowledged the merits of al-Buḥtarī and admired the refined thoughts and innovativeness of al-Mutanabbī. He not only memorised hundreds of lines of poetry, he also composed verses to imitate and illustrate the craft of the master poets. No doubt he transferred his enthusiasm and joy to his student, as Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan recalls:

> When he read the poetry of *al-Ḥamāsah* or some of the odes of al-Buḥtarī, the market of ʿUkkāẓ would be pictured before us and we would actually feel the magical effect the poet used to have on the hearts of the Arabs. How he would delineate the destiny of tribes, change the criteria of honour and nobility, and of humiliation and insignificance. He would elevate some and disgrace others. An Arab would take joy in listening to it and become ecstatic. Shaykh Khalīl would display a vivid picture of the meanings and effect of the poem. It was as though poetry had mixed with his flesh and blood, and its rhythm and music would gush forth from every hair of his body."[22]

The extraordinary ardour and dedication of Shaykh Khalīl's teaching must have been rooted in an instinct, or even a deep-seated need:

> Traces of his joy would become apparent when he used to teach us. He would not give us time off from studies except on Fridays, I do not know how he even permitted us to take time off on Fridays. I cannot remember any days off except for Fridays. Shaykh Khalīl would return from the university tired and fatigued, dripping with perspiration. No sooner had he returned to his house (one of the windows of his house used to face our old house), but he would call out to me at the top of his voice while standing by the window. We had no alternative but to respond to his call. Very often it happened that he would go to Aligarh or one of the other cities to attend a conference, an examination or selection board meeting. He would return just before the time of our classes. We would be certain that there would be no classes on that day, then all of a sudden we would hear his voice calling us. This was because teaching was the food which strengthened his soul and he experienced no comfort without it.[23]

No doubt, the ardour of the teacher was matched and rewarded by the talent of the student. The young ʾAbū al-Ḥasan had studied some grammar, morphology and Arabic under his two uncles, Shaykh ʿAzīz al-Raḥmān and Shaykh Ṭalḥah ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥasanī. With that and what he learnt under Shaykh Khalīl, he displayed a flair for the Arabic language, both in speaking and writing. Shaykh Nadwī accompanied his brother to a meeting of the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ movement in 1926/1344 AH in the city of Kanpur. He was

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 107-08.

the youngest of those attending, just twelve years old. He addressed some of the Arab guests in Arabic and they were astonished. On this occasion, he had the opportunity to meet some of the senior scholars and leaders of India, such as Shaykh Muḥammad Sulaymān Manṣūrpūrī, the author of *Raḥmat li al-ʿĀlamīn*; Dr Dhākir Ḥusayn, a future president of the Republic of India; Shaykh Ḥakīm ʾAjmal Khān; Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAlī Jawhar, the leader of the Khilāfah movement; and Ẓafar ʿAlī Khān, the brilliant and famous journalist.

Lucknow University

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan enrolled in the Department of Arabic at Lucknow University on the advice of his teacher Shaykh Khalīl. He was an excellent student and took a degree in literature (*Fāḍil Adab*) and completed it with merit and received a medal in 1929/1347 AH. The following year he attained a degree in *ḥadīth* while still the youngest student in the department.

During this time he studied Urdu, learning its sources and schools, its history, and its literature. He acquired proficiency and continued his learning. Also at this time he resumed study of the English language under ʾUstādh Khalīl al-Dīn. His aptitude for the language and its literature prompted him to progress further. He began taking English lessons from the senior ʾUstādh Muḥammad Samīʿ al-Ṣiddīqī, and all but devoted himself exclusively to it. Some of his relatives encouraged him because of the demands of the time, the material opportunities, notably government jobs, that proficiency in English allowed. When his mother heard this she wrote to him a moving, affectionate letter of advice. She praised the virtues of the Arabic language and the ʾIslāmic sciences, their usefulness in calling people to God, seeking His pleasure, and combining the good of this world and the hereafter. She wrote, "O ʿAlī! Do not be deceived by anyone. If you desire the pleasure of God and love to fulfil my rights, then look at those who spent their lives in the quest for knowledge. Look at their lofty status and elevated rank! Look at Walī ʾAllāh al-Muḥaddith Dihlawī, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Dihlawī and ʿAbd al-Qādir Dihlawī… O ʿAlī! If I had one hundred children, I would have devoted all of them to the knowledge of ʾIslām." She made supplication to God to direct her son to what He loves and what He is pleased with. God surely accepted her supplication, for ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's heart recoiled from the English language. He had already learnt enough to make use of sources in English while preparing his own books.

He enrolled at Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ in 1929/1347 AH and for two years studied *ḥadīth* sciences under ʿAllāmah Muḥaddith Shaykh Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān Ṭonkī (d. 1942/1361 AH), working on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan ʾAbī Dāwūd* and *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī*. I heard Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan say, "It was not Shakh Ḥaydar's habit to write the *ʾijāzah* in his

own hand. Instead, he would ask one of the students to write it down for those who asked him for permission. However, because of his love and affection for me, he wrote the *ʾijāzah* in his own hand."

Also in Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan studied a few books of *fiqh* with Shaykh Muftī Shiblī Jayrājpūrī ʾAʿẓamī, parts of *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* with ʿAllāmah Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān Ṭonkī, selected *suwar* with Shaykh Khalīl, and the commentary on the latter *suwar* of the Qurʾān with ʾUstādh Khawājah ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Fārūqī, the head of religious affairs at Jāmiʿah Millīyah ʾIslāmiyyah in Delhi, while the latter was a guest at his brother's house in Lucknow. He also studied Greek philosophy with ʿAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī.

He completed his literary studies under ʿAllāmah Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī al-Marrākishī, lecturer in Arabic literature at Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, who came there in 1930/1348 AH at the invitation of ʿAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan studied *Dīwān al-Nābighah* and *Sharḥ Shudhūr al-Dhahab* under Shaykh Sulaymān Nadwī. He mastered and progressed in Arabic to a degree rarely witnessed, his eloquence surpassed that of his contemporaries in both writing and speaking.

His journeys in quest of knowledge

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan travelled to Lahore in 1929/1347 AH on the invitation of his paternal aunt. Her husband, Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭalḥah al-Ḥasanī, was a professor at the Eastern College in Lahore. Though Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was fifteen years old at that time, some of his articles and Arabic translations had already been published. Professor al-Ḥasanī became fond of him and took him to visit the many sites of ʾIslāmic historical interest in Lahore. The city was a hub of knowledge and culture, of organisations, societies, and political and social parties, and a centre for their publications and journalism. Senior scholars and righteous Muslims lived there, men of letters, poets, revivalist leaders, and leaders of movements fighting for freedom from British occupation.

Professor al-Ḥasanī arranged meetings with senior figures and took Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan with him to his college. He introduced him to Sayyid Muḥammad Shafīʿ, rector of the college and an expert on education, proficient in many languages including English and Arabic. Professor al-Ḥasanī said to him, "This nephew of mine is studying Arabic and English. Why don't you test him and then advise him as to which of the two languages he should study for the future." ʾUstādh Muḥammad Shafīʿ, who did not normally invite people to his house, agreed to do so. After supper the next day ʾUstādh Muḥammad Shafīʿ studied the young student's articles, put questions to him and tested him. He then commended him to choose Arabic and assured him that he would excel in it.

During his stay in Lahore he met other famous figures, most notably the poet and thinker ᶜAllāmah Dr Muḥammad ᵓIqbāl, whose academic and literary assemblies he had attended. The famous poet became attached to him, even though he was young and unknown. He had translated one of ᵓIqbāl's poems, *al-Qamar*, into Arabic prose. The poet was impressed and received it graciously. He questioned the youth about the Arabic language, about Arabic reference works, litterateurs, and past and present Arab poets. Satisfied with the answers, ᵓIqbāl permitted and encouraged him to translate his other poems into Arabic. Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan's efforts to do so became the material for his speeches on ᵓIqbāl, which he delivered in later years in Cairo, Damascus, Makkah and Madīnah. Eventually, he would publish a valuable and popular book about the poet, titled *Rawāᵓiᶜ ᵓIqbāl* (Glories of ᵓIqbāl).

He was introduced also to the learned and pious Shaykh ᵓAḥmad ᶜAli Lahawrī, the famous commentator of the Qurᵓān, and became deeply attached to him. He made a second journey in 1930/1348 AH to benefit from Shaykh ᵓAḥmad's expertise in *tafsīr*. He studied half of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* with him. On a third trip in 1931/1349 AH he studied with him ᵓImām Walī ᵓAllāh Dihlawī's *Ḥujjat ᵓAllāh al-Bālighah* and passed the examination on it with merit. On a fourth journey in 1932/1350 AH he attended Shaykh ᵓAḥmad's advanced *tafsīr* classes for madrasah graduates and scholars, and gained a certificate in *tafsīr*.

Towards the end of 1931/1349 AH, he travelled with his teacher ᶜAllāmah Dr Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī to Varanasi (Baranes), Azamgarh, Mau (a town in Uttar Pardesh) and Mubārakpūr. He used to translate for him and benefit from him. It was probably on this journey that he read the initial portions of the *Ṣiḥāḥ* to the author of *Tuḥfat al-ᵓAḥwadhī*, ᶜAllāmah ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Mubārakpūrī, who granted him an open permission to narrate his *ᵓaḥādīth*.

He travelled to Deoband in 1932/1350 AH. By this time, aged nineteen or twenty, he had graduated from Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ. He was already known for his proficiency in the Arabic language and his aptitude for *ḥadīth* studies. His brother spoke to Shaykh al-ᵓIslām Sayyid Ḥusayn ᵓAḥmad Madanī (d. 1957/1376 AH) about accepting ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan as his student at Deoband, he agreed to do so "with his well-known munificence."[24] Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan recalls:

> I used to attend two important lessons which were personally conducted by Mawlānā Ḥusayn ᵓAḥmad Madanī, the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and head teacher at Dār al-ᶜUlūm, namely the second volume of *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* and the second volume of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. I cannot forget his *ḥadīth* lessons which had a special charm in my heart. A religious stillness and spiritual shade would engulf the Dār al-Ḥadīth. The sweet resonant voice of the Shaykh and his beautiful Arabic tone still reverberate in

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

> my ears. These were the lasts months of the academic year and the syllabus had not been completed as yet. The lessons therefore continued for almost the entire day. Lessons would start after the *fajr ṣalāh* and continue throughout the day. There would also be lessons after the *ᶜaṣr ṣalāh*, with a break after the *maghrib ṣalāh*, lessons would continue after the *ᶜishāᵓ ṣalāh* till ten or eleven at night. And this was in winter, during severe cold weather. But the students rarely got tired because of the humour, anecdotes and joking of the Shaykh.[25]

Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan also attended the assemblies of ᶜAllāmah ᵓAnwar Shāh Kashmīrī, and studied *tajwīd* (recitation of the Qurᵓān) under Shaykh Qāri ᵓAṣghar ᶜAlī according to the narration of Ḥafṣ from ᶜĀṣim ibn ᵓAbī al-Najūd al-Kūfī. He himself describes how he became acquainted with Shaykh ᵓIᶜzāz ᶜAlī and was permitted to attended some of his *fiqh* lessons:

> A dignified scholar used to occasionally attend the assembly of Shaykh Ḥusayn ᵓAḥmad Madanī. He possessed the awe of senior scholars and the dignity of teachers of the past. He remained silent most of the time and spoke very little. But when he spoke, he spoke concisely and decisively. He distinguished himself in this assembly as though he loved the owner of the house the most, accorded him the most respect, and remained most silent in listening to him. His heart would be filled with love for him, his ears would be filled with his speech, yet his eyes could not get enough of him. He kept his gaze down despite not having any illness, he lowered his head despite not suffering any disgrace, and remained silent despite not having any defect in speech. I asked one of the brothers as to who he was and he informed me that he was Mawlānā ᵓIᶜzāz ᶜAlī. Shaykh Ḥusayn ᵓAḥmad Madanī interceded on my behalf and asked him to teach me something. He accepted and permitted me to attend his lessons in *Sharḥ al-Niqāyah*. He paid special attention to these classes and chose a select number of intelligent students to read to him in a particular manner. He permitted me to read a lesson from *Nūr al-ᵓAnwār* after the *ᶜaṣr ṣalāh*."[26]

In 1939/1357 AH Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan travelled with ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī to Karnal, Panipat, Thanesar and Delhi. It was an academic and commemorative journey in which he visited the academic and religious institutes, saw historical monuments, was introduced to senior scholars and well-known leaders, and attended the assemblies of scholars and men of letters. It was during this trip that he first heard of the *daᶜwah* movement of Shaykh Muḥammad ᵓIlyās Kāndhalawī. In terms of both academic and practical experiences, it proved a most beneficial journey.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

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> I used to attend two important lessons which were personally conducted by Mawlānā Ḥusayn ᵓAḥmad Madanī, the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and head teacher at Dār al-ᶜUlūm, namely the second volume of *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* and the second volume of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. I cannot forget his *ḥadīth* lessons which had a special charm in my heart. A religious stillness and spiritual shade would engulf the Dār al-Ḥadīth. The sweet resonant voice of the Shaykh and his beautiful Arabic tone still reverberate in

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

> my ears. These were the lasts months of the academic year and the syllabus had not been completed as yet. The lessons therefore continued for almost the entire day. Lessons would start after the *fajr ṣalāh* and continue throughout the day. There would also be lessons after the *ᶜaṣr ṣalāh*, with a break after the *maghrib ṣalāh*, lessons would continue after the *ᶜishāᵓ ṣalāh* till ten or eleven at night. And this was in winter, during severe cold weather. But the students rarely got tired because of the humour, anecdotes and joking of the Shaykh.[25]

Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan also attended the assemblies of ᶜAllāmah ᵓAnwar Shāh Kashmīrī, and studied *tajwīd* (recitation of the Qurᵓān) under Shaykh Qāri ᵓAṣghar ᶜAlī according to the narration of Ḥafṣ from ᶜĀṣim ibn ᵓAbī al-Najūd al-Kūfī. He himself describes how he became acquainted with Shaykh ᵓIᶜzāz ᶜAlī and was permitted to attended some of his *fiqh* lessons:

> A dignified scholar used to occasionally attend the assembly of Shaykh Ḥusayn ᵓAḥmad Madanī. He possessed the awe of senior scholars and the dignity of teachers of the past. He remained silent most of the time and spoke very little. But when he spoke, he spoke concisely and decisively. He distinguished himself in this assembly as though he loved the owner of the house the most, accorded him the most respect, and remained most silent in listening to him. His heart would be filled with love for him, his ears would be filled with his speech, yet his eyes could not get enough of him. He kept his gaze down despite not having any illness, he lowered his head despite not suffering any disgrace, and remained silent despite not having any defect in speech. I asked one of the brothers as to who he was and he informed me that he was Mawlānā ᵓIᶜzāz ᶜAlī. Shaykh Ḥusayn ᵓAḥmad Madanī interceded on my behalf and asked him to teach me something. He accepted and permitted me to attend his lessons in *Sharḥ al-Niqāyah*. He paid special attention to these classes and chose a select number of intelligent students to read to him in a particular manner. He permitted me to read a lesson from *Nūr al-ᵓAnwār* after the *ᶜaṣr ṣalāh*."[26]

In 1939/1357 AH Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan travelled with ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī to Karnal, Panipat, Thanesar and Delhi. It was an academic and commemorative journey in which he visited the academic and religious institutes, saw historical monuments, was introduced to senior scholars and well-known leaders, and attended the assemblies of scholars and men of letters. It was during this trip that he first heard of the *daᶜwah* movement of Shaykh Muḥammad ᵓIlyās Kāndhalawī. In terms of both academic and practical experiences, it proved a most beneficial journey.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

His personal studies

Aside from his madrasa and private lessons, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan read extensively on his own. During his early days, he read in Urdu: the biography, *al-Fārūq* by ᶜAllāmah Shiblī Nuᶜmānī; the poetry collections, *Ābū Ḥayāt*, *Nayrangi Khayāl*, and the poems of Muʾmin, Ghālib, Dhawq, ᶜĀtish and ʾAmīr Mīnāʾī; *Yādi ʾAyyām* written by his father; *Taqrīr Dil Padhīr* by ᶜAllāmah Muḥammad Qāsim Nānotwī; *Ḥukūmati Khud ʾIkhtiyārī* by Sayyid Ṭufayl ʾAḥmad Manglorī; the newspaper, *al-Hilāl* edited by ʾAbū al-Kalām ʾĀzād; and the Sunday paper, *Zamīndār*. Among the books he studied around the year 1936/1354 AH are: *Waqāʾiᶜ ʾAḥmadī*, on incidents from the life of Sayyid ʾAḥmad Shahīd; collections of ʾIqbāl's poetry: *Ḍarbi Kalīm*, *Bāli Jibrīl*, *ʾAsrāri Khudī*, *Rumūzi bi Khudī*, *Payām Mashriq*, *Jāvid Nāmah*, and *Zabūri ᶜAjam*; *Mustaqbal al-Muslimīn al-Lāmiᶜ* by Shaykh Ṭufayl ʾAḥmad; and the essays of Mawlānā Abū al-ᶜĀlāʾ Mawdūdī in *Tarjumān al-Qurʾān*.

Among the books in Arabic he studied around 1938/1356 AH were: *Fajr al-ʾIslām*, *Ḍuḥa al-ʾIslām*, *Ẓuhr al-ʾIslām* and *Zuᶜamāʾ al-Iṣlāḥ* by Dr ʾAḥmad Amīn; *Ḥāḍir al-ᶜĀlam al-ʾIslāmī* by the American, Lothrop Stoddard,[27] annotated by ʾAmīr Shakīb ʾArsalān, and *Muʾtamar Umm al-Qurā* by ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Kawākibī. He studied in translation: *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* by John William Draper,[28] The *History of European Morals* by W. E. H. Lecky, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Gibbon, The *History of Modern Philosophy* by Harald Hoffding, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey* by Halide Edip Hanim,[29] *ʾIslām at the Crossroads* and *The Road to Mecca* by the Austrian Muslim, Muḥammad ʾAsad, *The Story of My Experiments with the Truth* by Gandhi, and *My Story* by Jawaharlal Nehru.

He benefited from the Arabic newspapers and magazines published in the Arab world, which came to his elder brother or to Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, e.g. *al-Manār*, *al-Hilāl*, *al-Muqtaṭaf*, *al-Zahrāʾ*, *al-Majmaᶜ al-ᶜIlmī al-ᶜArabī*, *al-ᶜIrfān* and *al-Fatḥ*. Through this he became acquainted with conditions prevalent in the Arab countries, and informed himslef as much as he could with contemporary Arab thinkers, writers and political leaders:

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[27] A translation of Lothrop Stoddard, *The New World of Islam* (Bungay, Suffolk: Richard Clay & Sons Ltd., 1922).

[28] J. W. Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1910).

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I was attached to the caravan of ʾIslāmic culture in the *Arab East*, desirous of travelling with it, and not being left behind by it. Most of all I was desirous of what the printing presses published and what the bookshops sold in Egypt, irrespective of whether they were small booklets or voluminous works. Thus I read the works of Dr Ṭā Hā Ḥusayn, ʾUstādh al-ᶜAqqād, Dr ʾAḥmad Amīn, Dr Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, ʾUstādh ʾAḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt; and al-Manfalūṭī and al-Rāfiᶜī who came before them. I regularly studied *al-Risālah* and *al-Thaqāfah*, which used to be published fortnightly. They represented two different literary schools in their style and approach. They divided between them the Egyptian litterateurs, senior and amature writers. I became familiar with the writers in these two magazines who were affiliated to either of these two literary schools."[30]

The effects on his health

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was so dedicated to his studies that he hardly concerned himself with his health and well-being, and accordingly suffered many illnesses. On one occasion, when Shaykh Khalīl learnt of his illness, he wrote to him:

O ᶜAlī! I am pained by the news of your illnesses which have weakened you, caused you to remain in your house and become bed-ridden. The only reason for this is your transgression against the ways of guidance and the path of good sense, acting against the Sunnah of the person of Muḥammad ﷺ whose son and scion you are. "Your family enjoys a right over you, your body has a right over you, and your Lord has a right over you." But you, may I be sacrificed for you, may have fulfilled the right of your Master, but you are forgetting the rights over you of your body and family. This does not befit a person in whom the Hāshimī blood is flowing, who did not trample upon an ant and showed mercy even to a louse. O son of al-Muṣṭafā! I want you to honour me by coming to me in Bhopal even if it is for one month. This you must either do out of your good will, if you accept this good will, or as an order, if I have the right to order you, or to fulfil the right of myself, if I enjoy a right over you. Come to me so that I may fulfil my obligation to you until God blesses you with good health, because the weather of this place at present is no less salubrious than that of Nainita and Masouri.[31]

Purification of the soul

God says in *Sūrat al-Jumuᶜah*, 62: 2, "It is He who raised among the unlettered (*al-ʾUmmiyyūn*) a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His verses, and purifying them (*wa yuzakkīhim*), and teaching them the Book and Wisdom. And before this they were in manifest error."

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[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 130-31.

[31] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAᶜlām* (Lucknow: Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, 2004), pp. 11-12. Additionally, Nainita and Masouri are two hilly-stations in India.

This instruction is emphasised in many verses. Purification (*tazkiyah*) is one of the four essentials of religion which the Messenger of God ﷺ came to establish and perfect.[32] Purification of the soul entails culturing and adorning it with good qualities and cleansing it of bad qualities. *Tazkiyah* came to be known as *taṣawwuf* (spiritual purification) towards the end of the second century AH. It comprises a way of living, a life-path, based on individual self-discipline with social dimensions and responsibilities. It aims to cleanse the heart, purify the soul, through establishing a bond with God and performing good deeds; its focus is disciplining the soul so that it favours spiritual over worldly attractions. It progressed and evolved within the ʾIslāmic framework, eventually accruing a distinctive psychology and philosophy. Some of its practioners adopted diverse methodologies, part of which became adulterated with non-ʾIslāmic doctrines and innovations in creedal and devotional elements of the religion. Others held on to the original spirit and teaching of self-purification and the performance of good deeds. Among the latter at the beginning of the fourteenth century AH, one who combined the disipline of *taṣawwuf* with classical ʾIslāmic scholarship, was Shaykh Rashīd ʾAḥmad Gangohī in India.

Under the tutelage of senior scholars he soon surpassed his contemporaries in traditional and rational sciences and was recognised as the leading Ḥanafī Jurist and Ṣūfī. He was one of those who pledged allegiance in the Ṣūfī way to Shaykh ʾImdād ʾAllāh al-Muhājir al-Makkī, and he was a close friend of Shaykh Muḥammad Qāsim Nānotwī. He wrote several books including a multi-volume collection of *fatāwā* (legal dicta). He passed away in 1905/1322 AH, leaving behind many disciples (*murīdīn*) and deputies (*khulafāʾ*) in the path of *taṣawwuf*. The most senior was Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm Raipūrī and, after him, his deputy, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī.

The authentic discipline of *tazkiyah* was integral to the family life of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's forefathers and made up part of their legacy. Throughout his life he did not deviate from his childhood attendance at assemblies of learned scholars and righteous people. Among those whose assemblies he attended were his teacher in *tafsīr*, ᶜAllāmah ʾAḥmad ᶜAlī Lahawrī; his shaykh and guide, Shaykh Ghulām Muḥammad; Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad Madanī; and the great *ḥadīth* scholar, Shaykh Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhalawī. He eventually met the great Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī and came under his tutelage.

Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī (d. 1962/1381 AH) was among those scholars blessed with the ability to combine knowledge with practice and high education with self-purification. He was learned, intelligent and open-minded. Intuitive and insightful he guided both the elite and the masses by the example of his achievement of purity of heart. He spent more than half of his life studying

[32] The other three being, *Ṣalāh*, *Ṣiyām* and *Hajj*.

the Muslims of India in their diverse conditions, preoccupations and situations. He concluded that the greatest obligation and responsibility of his era was to revive and renew sincerity and good character, and that the best means of achieving this was love of God by abundant remembrance of Him, and keeping company with His righteous servants who truly recognised Him. He was pragmatic by nature and loved action and striving but distanced himself from extremism. Always conscious of the changes wrought by time, he was deeply grieved by the circumstances of the Muslims.[33]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan recalls his first journey to Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī in these words:

> Towards the end of December 1939 (Dhū al-Qaᶜdah 1358 AH) we undertook, as three friends, a journey to learn more about the religious and educational centres of India so that we could benefit from their experiences and their ways of working. After reaching Sahāranpūr, we proceeded towards Raipūr. We walked for five miles until we reached the *khānqah* of Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī where we received a warm and cordial welcome despite being strangers to him at our first meeting. It was as though he had an appointment with us. We observed the tranquillity which pervaded this remote village. It was as if a cloak of serenity covered the villagers causing visitors to forget all their worries and concerns. As for the latter part of the night, one heard nothing but the sound of the remembrance of God and the recitation of the Qurʾān, and one saw everyone either in *rukūᶜ* [bowing] or in *sajdah* [prostration].[34]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan benefited from Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī's guidance until he became the most senior of his *khulafāʾ* and very dear to him. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan singled out three virtues of this great man for which he was particularly indebted to him:

> *His humility*. Psychologists and modern writers refer to this as self-denial. I never saw anyone equal to him in this regard and I do not know anyone like him. For every knowledgeable person there is one who is more knowledgeable.
>
> *His broad vision, open-mindedness and pragmatism*, which I did not witness in other experienced scholars, and political leaders who had lived through the ups and downs of life. The peculiar nature of my upbringing and my varied studies gave me an academic, intellectual and emotional training which enabled me to value these qualities that God bestowed on the Shaykh. […] It was his wide vision, open-mindedness, and strong connection with and knowledge of his era, his thoughts, perceptions and pains for the challenges of his time that prompted me to value him. It was he who encouraged me to complete the series *Saviours of the ʾIslāmic Spirit*, and he would constantly give me the confidence to carry on with it, to write other beneficial books, to occupy myself with ʾIslāmic affairs, to spread ʾIslāmic culture, and to undertake the propagation of ʾIslām.

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
[34] *Ibid.*

His special affection towards me. The only thing that I can compare it to is the affection and kindness of a mother.[35]

The most influential of his teachers

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan studied many different subjects with many different teachers before and after his enrolment at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, and he benefitted from them all. However there are five teachers whose influence stayed with him throughout his life: they shaped his mind, his character and his achievements. They are: ʿAllāmah Shaykh Khalīl ibn Muḥammad al-Yamānī al-ʾAnṣārī, Dr Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, ʿAllāmah Muḥaddith Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān Ṭonkī, Shaykh ʾAḥmad ʿAlī Lahawrī and Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad Madanī.

Shaykh Khalīl

The brilliant and learned Arabist, Khalīl ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn[36] al-ʾAnṣārī al-Yamānī was born in Bhopal in 1886/1303 AH. He studied under his father and the teachers in Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. He possessed a natural gift for language and literature, and a unique passion and flair for teaching. He lived in Lucknow from 1924-33/1342-51 AH, teaching Arabic at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, Lucknow University and at his house. He was loved and honoured by faculty colleagues and students alike for his dignified Arab manners, sweetness in speech, light-heartedness, quick wit, intelligence and erudition, his unaffected simple life style and various other noble traits. In his later years he moved to Karachi where he died on Friday 26th August 1966 (9th Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1386 AH).

Shaykh al-Yamānī was one of those rare teachers able to pass on their own enthusiasm along with their knowledge and skills. He taught Arabic language, literature and rhetoric (*balāghah*) through a unique, innovative method such that his students came to love Arabic poetry and prose as well as becoming proficient in their understanding and practice of it.

Shaykh Nadwī spoke of him often and always with glowing praise of his method in teaching Arabic:

> He had an unparalleled ability to transmit his taste and vision to the students and enable this to flow in their veins, blowing life into whatever he was teaching from

[35] *Ibid*., pp. 47-48.

[36] The grandfather of Shaykh Khalīl was the famous *ḥadīth* scholar ʿAllāmah Qāḍī Ḥusayn ibn Muḥsin al-ʾAnṣārī al-Yamānī. He was born in al-Ḥudaydah in Yemen in 1829/1244 AH. He acquired proficiency in Shāfiʿī *fiqh* and studied *ḥadīth* under Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Bārī al-ʾAhdal, ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir al-Ḥāzimī and other scholars. He moved to India and settled in Bhopal and taught there. He passed away in Bhopal in 1909/1327 AH.

> books, developing correct scholarly taste, and closely following the author [under study] in his language, style and taste. This is a merit which is only found in one teacher and specialist among a thousand. This is a God-given ability and not something which can be learnt.[37]

His love of Arabic was not divorced from his love of the Qurʾān and God's Messenger ﷺ, or from the fundamental teachings of ʾIslām:

> Shaykh Khalīl taught us *Sūrat al-Zumar* with his yearning to securely embed belief in the oneness of God in the heart. […] He was genealogically affiliated to a Yemeni family in whose favour the Messenger of God ﷺ testified that it possessed *ʾīmān* and goodness, "Faith is in Yemen." […] When he taught this subject, he did so exceptionally and opened ones heart for *tawḥīd*. I have treasured this bounty ever since that time. I express my gratitude to God for it. The verse, "Listen! For God alone is absolute devotion" (*Sūrat al-Zumar*, 39: 3) is firmly impressed in my heart. The schemes and conjectures which the philosophers of the polytheistic system have been holding on to since time immemorial are no more than a snare - "We only worship them so that they may take us close to God" (*Sūrat al-Zumar*, 39: 3).[38]

Dr Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī

Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Hilālī al-Marrākishī al-Maghribī, also known by the *kunyah* (agnomen) ʾAbū Shakīb, since he named his first child after his friend ʾAmīr Shakīb ʾArsalān; he was born in the village of al-Farkh in Sijilmāsah in Morocco in 1893/1310 AH. He studied under his father and memorised the Qurʾān when he was twelve years old. He travelled to Algiers in 1914/1332 AH, where he studied in the madrasah of Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥabīb ʾAllāh al-Shanqīṭī for seven years. He returned to Morocco in 1921/1339 AH and attended the classes of the eminent Shuyūkh of Fes, Shaykh al-Fāṭimī Shirāwī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-ʿArabī al-ʿAlawī, Shaykh Muḥammad Sukīraj, and others. He graduated from the University of al-Qarawiyyīn before travelling to Cairo, where he joined ʿAllāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā for advanced studies in al-ʾAzhar. After performing the *ḥajj*, he headed for India, where he studied *ḥadīth* under Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Mubārakpūrī, the author of *Tuḥfat al-ʾAḥwadhī*. After three years in India he went to al-Zubayr in Iraq (1923/1341 AH) where he joined the Mauritanian scholar, Shaykh Muḥammad al-ʾAmīn al-Shanqīṭī, the founder of Madrasah al-Najāt al-ʾAhliyyah in al-Zubayr. He married his daughter and remained there for three years. He then travelled to Egypt and from there to Saudi Arabia. He stayed as a guest of King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd for a few months and was then appointed as a supervisor of education in al-Masjid al-Nabawī. After two years he was transferred to al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and

[37] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, pp. 88-91.

[38] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, p. 195.

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Dr Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī

Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Hilālī al-Marrākishī al-Maghribī, also known by the *kunyah* (agnomen) ʾAbū Shakīb, since he named his first child after his friend ʾAmīr Shakīb ʾArsalān; he was born in the village of al-Farkh in Sijilmāsah in Morocco in 1893/1310 AH. He studied under his father and memorised the Qurʾān when he was twelve years old. He travelled to Algiers in 1914/1332 AH, where he studied in the madrasah of Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥabīb ʾAllāh al-Shanqīṭī for seven years. He returned to Morocco in 1921/1339 AH and attended the classes of the eminent Shuyūkh of Fes, Shaykh al-Fāṭimī Shirāwī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-ʿArabī al-ʿAlawī, Shaykh Muḥammad Sukīraj, and others. He graduated from the University of al-Qarawiyyīn before travelling to Cairo, where he joined ʿAllāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā for advanced studies in al-ʾAzhar. After performing the *ḥajj*, he headed for India, where he studied *ḥadīth* under Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Mubārakpūrī, the author of *Tuḥfat al-ʾAḥwadhī*. After three years in India he went to al-Zubayr in Iraq (1923/1341 AH) where he joined the Mauritanian scholar, Shaykh Muḥammad al-ʾAmīn al-Shanqīṭī, the founder of Madrasah al-Najāt al-ʾAhliyyah in al-Zubayr. He married his daughter and remained there for three years. He then travelled to Egypt and from there to Saudi Arabia. He stayed as a guest of King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd for a few months and was then appointed as a supervisor of education in al-Masjid al-Nabawī. After two years he was transferred to al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and

[37] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, pp. 88-91.

[38] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, p. 195.

His special affection towards me. The only thing that I can compare it to is the affection and kindness of a mother.[35]

The most influential of his teachers

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan studied many different subjects with many different teachers before and after his enrolment at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, and he benefitted from them all. However there are five teachers whose influence stayed with him throughout his life: they shaped his mind, his character and his achievements. They are: ʿAllāmah Shaykh Khalīl ibn Muḥammad al-Yamānī al-ʾAnṣārī, Dr Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, ʿAllāmah Muḥaddith Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān Ṭonkī, Shaykh ʾAḥmad ʿAlī Lahawrī and Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad Madanī.

Shaykh Khalīl

The brilliant and learned Arabist, Khalīl ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn[36] al-ʾAnṣārī al-Yamānī was born in Bhopal in 1886/1303 AH. He studied under his father and the teachers in Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. He possessed a natural gift for language and literature, and a unique passion and flair for teaching. He lived in Lucknow from 1924-33/1342-51 AH, teaching Arabic at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, Lucknow University and at his house. He was loved and honoured by faculty colleagues and students alike for his dignified Arab manners, sweetness in speech, light-heartedness, quick wit, intelligence and erudition, his unaffected simple life style and various other noble traits. In his later years he moved to Karachi where he died on Friday 26th August 1966 (9th Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1386 AH).

Shaykh al-Yamānī was one of those rare teachers able to pass on their own enthusiasm along with their knowledge and skills. He taught Arabic language, literature and rhetoric (*balāghah*) through a unique, innovative method such that his students came to love Arabic poetry and prose as well as becoming proficient in their understanding and practice of it.

Shaykh Nadwī spoke of him often and always with glowing praise of his method in teaching Arabic:

> He had an unparalleled ability to transmit his taste and vision to the students and enable this to flow in their veins, blowing life into whatever he was teaching from

[35] *Ibid*., pp. 47-48.

[36] The grandfather of Shaykh Khalīl was the famous *ḥadīth* scholar ʿAllāmah Qāḍī Ḥusayn ibn Muḥsin al-ʾAnṣārī al-Yamānī. He was born in al-Ḥudaydah in Yemen in 1829/1244 AH. He acquired proficiency in Shāfiʿī *fiqh* and studied *ḥadīth* under Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Bārī al-ʾAhdal, ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir al-Ḥāzimī and other scholars. He moved to India and settled in Bhopal and taught there. He passed away in Bhopal in 1909/1327 AH.

> books, developing correct scholarly taste, and closely following the author [under study] in his language, style and taste. This is a merit which is only found in one teacher and specialist among a thousand. This is a God-given ability and not something which can be learnt.[37]

His love of Arabic was not divorced from his love of the Qurʾān and God's Messenger ﷺ, or from the fundamental teachings of ʾIslām:

> Shaykh Khalīl taught us *Sūrat al-Zumar* with his yearning to securely embed belief in the oneness of God in the heart. […] He was genealogically affiliated to a Yemeni family in whose favour the Messenger of God ﷺ testified that it possessed *ʾīmān* and goodness, "Faith is in Yemen." […] When he taught this subject, he did so exceptionally and opened ones heart for *tawḥīd*. I have treasured this bounty ever since that time. I express my gratitude to God for it. The verse, "Listen! For God alone is absolute devotion" (*Sūrat al-Zumar*, 39: 3) is firmly impressed in my heart. The schemes and conjectures which the philosophers of the polytheistic system have been holding on to since time immemorial are no more than a snare - "We only worship them so that they may take us close to God" (*Sūrat al-Zumar*, 39: 3).[38]

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[38] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, p. 195.

al-Maᶜhad al-Saᶜūdī for one year. He then received letters from Indonesia and India requesting him to teach in their institutes. He accepted the invitation of ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī from Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ, and in 1930/1348 AH was appointed head teacher of literature. During his three years in India he learnt English and, with the assistance of his students, Masᶜūd ᶜĀlam, ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan and Muḥammad Nāẓim, he founded the periodical *al-Ḍiyāᵓ* in 1932/1350 AH. He later returned to al-Zubayr for three more years of teaching at Madrasah al-Najāt al-ᵓAhliyyah. Then he travelled to Geneva in Switzerland, and stayed with ᵓAmīr Shakīb ᵓArsalān, who recommended him to friends in the German Foreign Office in Berlin, which led to his appointment as a lecturer in the University of Bonn. A year later he studied and took a diploma in German, and completed his doctoral dissertation in 1940/1358 AH. Thereafter, he returned to his teaching in Iraq and Morocco. He died in his home in Casablanca on Monday 15th June 1987 (17th Shawwāl 1407 AH).

Dr al-Hilālī was well known in academic and literary circles and enjoyed an exalted position among the *ᶜulamāᵓ* of India. Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan described his coming to India as a landmark event in the teaching of Arabic there. "The fact is that the work which Shaykh Khalīl initiated in spreading the correct way of teaching Arabic, by developing a taste for it and expertise in it, reached perfection at the hands of Dr al-Hilālī. I benefited tremendously from him [...] He was especially affectionate towards me because of the relationship between my elder brother and Shaykh Khalīl."[39] The affection was mutual as evidenced by the correspondence between them. Dr al-Hilālī followed Shaykh Nadwī's progress closely and with growing admiration for his work. He understood very clearly the link between sound knowledge of Arabic and sound comprehension of the guidance of ᵓIslām. In a letter to Dr al-Hilālī, Shaykh Khalīl reminded him of it:

> It is because of ignorance of the Arabic language in India that the Qadiyānīs, the false claimants to following the Qurᵓān alone, and the deviated Barilwiyyah who follow Muṣṭafā Barilwī sprang up. It is for this reason that I exercised patience in living with you for a few years so that I might teach the Arabic language in a proper manner, despite the hardships I had to endure. I would have lived for a longer spell with you had it not been for the malaria which afflicted me fifteen times in a short period of time. However, I left behind distinguished students who will take over from me, and all praise is due to God for this.[40]

Shaykh Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān Ṭonkī

The learned *ḥadīth* scholar and jurist Shaykh Ḥaydar Ḥasan ibn ᵓAḥmad Ḥasan ibn Ghulām Ḥusayn Yāgistānī Afghānī Ṭonkī was born around the year

[39] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 98.
[40] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rasāᵓil al-ᵓAᶜlām*, pp. 28-29.

1864/1280 AH and grew up in Ṭonk. There he studied under his brothers Muḥammad Ḥasan, Maḥmūd Ḥasan and ᶜAlī Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān, and Mawlānā ᶜAbd al-Karīm. He then travelled to Lahore where he studied in al-Madrasah al-Nuᶜmāniyyah under Shaykh Ghulām ᵓAḥmad Nuᶜmānī Lahawrī. He went on to study the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* under Shaykh Ḥusayn ibn Muḥsin al-ᵓAnṣārī al-Yamānī, and received a general authorization from him to narrate the *ᵓaḥādīth* in these compilations. He then studied under the *ḥadīth* scholar Shaykh Nadhīr Ḥusayn Dihlawī and sought permission to narrate from him. He took charge of teaching at al-Madrasat al-Nāṣiriyyah and then at Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ in Lucknow in August 1921 (Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1339 AH). He remained there for around seventeen years teaching the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah*, serving the field of *ḥadīth* through teaching, research, writing, annotating and referencing. He devoted himslef to this work with all his heart and soul. He became the administrative head of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ in July 1932 (Rabīᶜ al-ᵓAwwal 1351 AH). He later returned to his home town in 1939/1358 AH and passed away on 31st May 1942 (15th Jumādā al-ᵓŪlā 1361 AH). He was buried in Ṭonk.[41]

His method of teaching *ḥadīth*[42] was in the tradition of *ḥadīth* research and scholarship: he would refer to the books of biographies (*Kutub al-Rijāl*) and the *ḥadīth* commentaries, and give students the freedom to engage in discussions with him. In narrating *ḥadīth* he would follow the practice of the Yemeni scholars, because he was influenced by his teacher ᶜAllāmah Ḥusayn ibn Muḥsin al-ᵓAnṣārī. He resorted constantly to the writings of ᵓAmīr Muḥammad ibn ᵓIsmāᶜīl al-Ṣanᶜānī (d. 1768/1181 AH), Sayyid Muḥammad ibn ᵓIbrāhīm ibn al-Wazīr (d. 1727/1139 AH), and ᶜAllāmah Qāḍī ᵓImām Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlī al-Shawkānī (d. 1834/1249 AH). As for Ḥanafī scholars, he resorted only to those who were famous for excellence in the field of *ḥadīth*, e.g. ᵓImām al-Ṭaḥāwī, Ḥāfiẓ al-Zaylāᵓī, ᶜAllāmah Ibn al-Turkumānī, and ᶜAllāmah Ibn Humām.

Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan was not only taught by Shaykh Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān but also lived in his room with him. He therefore witnessed how he spent his nights as well as his days. "I became attached to the students of Nadwah through the *ḥadīth* lessons which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth ᶜAllāmah Shaykh Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān al-Ṭonkī used to deliver at Dār al-ᶜUlūm Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ. I studied *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan ᵓAbī Dāwūd* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* word for word under him. I also studied parts of *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*

[41] See ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, vol. 8, pp. 125-28. Also see, Moḥammad ᵓAkram Nadwī, *Nafaḥāt al-Hind wa al-Yaman bi ᵓAsānīd al-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Imām al-Shāfiᶜī, 1998), pp. 43-44.
[42] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Purānī Chirāg*, vol. 1, p. 193.

under him."[43] The example of the teacher's devotional life made as deep an impression as his erudition and dedicated teaching. Shaykh Nadwī recalls:

> It was his habit to wake up in the latter part of the night, remain standing in *ṣalāh* for a long time, and recite the Qurʾān in an audible tone in the optional prayers. There was gentleness and humility in his voice. He would remain for a long time in prostration and weep intensely. He would then remain seated, engaged in inaudible remembrance of God. Once the call to the *fajr ṣalāh* was heard, he would leave and perform the *ṣalāh* behind Shaykh Ḥafīẓ ʾAllāh, who was very strict in his observance of the *ḥadīth* and used to perform the *fajr ṣalāh* while it was still dark. When Shaykh Ḥafīẓ ʾAllāh became engrossed in business, Shaykh Ṭonki began leading the *ṣalāh*. In his lessons he would give preference to performing *fajr* when it was lighter, following the opinion of ʾImām ʾAbū Ḥanīfah. However, when he led the *ṣalāh*, he would do so while it was dark and make a lengthy recitation of the Qurʾān and so end the *ṣalāh* when it was light. He used to say, "This is preferable and more correct. It is in this way that the relevant *ʾaḥādīth* can be reconciled."[44]

Shaykh ʾAḥmad ʿAlī Lahawrī

ʿAllāmah Shaykh ʾAḥmad ʿAlī Lahawrī (d. 1961/1380 AH) was the most sought-after teacher for commentary on the Qurʾān, on account of both his erudition and his piety. Students from the furthest cities of India would go to study under him. He served this branch of ʾIslāmic knowledge for around fifty years, and inspired others to engage in it. The spread of Qurʾān classes in India in modern times can be credited to him. This was among the blessings of his sincerity, piety, asceticism, and his striving for closeness to God.

He had studied *tafsīr* (Qurʾānic exegesis) under ʿAllāmah ʿUbayd ʾAllāh Sindī, well-known for *al-ʾIʿtibār wa al-Taʾwīl* (*Reflection and Exposition*), which details his particular method for explaining the meanings of the Qurʾān. Shaykh ʾAḥmad ʿAlī held special advanced *tafsīr* courses for those who had qualified from madāris and ʾIslāmic universities. From his lessons students learnt the rectification of beliefs, reform of habits and customs, and how to build a firm bond with the Qurʾān. His *tafsīr* comprised three important elements: explaining belief in the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), purged of all kinds and shades of polytheism, custom and innovation; reviewing the accounts and deepening one's love for the righteous friends (*ʾawliyāʾ*) of God ; awakening the spirit of *jihād*, of aversion in God's cause to evil and tyranny, and enmity towards the British who were occupying India.

As well as *tafsīr*, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan studied ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Dihlawī's *Ḥujjat ʾAllāh al-Bālighah* with him. He was captivated by his methodology and together they engaged in long discussions on ʾIslāmic fundamentals, ideas and values. He was also deeply impressed and influenced

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[43] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 94.

[44] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Purānī Chirāg*, vol. 1, p. 191.

by Shaykh ʾAḥmad ʿAlī's way of life; his self-discipline, piety, righteousness, his spiritual strength and integrity of character, and his meticulous concern to consume only what is lawful and refrain from what is doubtful, and his aversion to all that is evil.

Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad Madanī

Shaykh Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad Madanī, once given the prestigious title of Shaykh al-ʾIslām, was born on 6th October 1879 (19th Shawwāl 1296 AH). He received his primary education in Tāndah, the hometown of his forefathers in the district of Faizabad, India. He travelled to Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband in 1891/1308 AH and for a long period of time studied *ḥadīth* under Shaykh Maḥmūd Ḥasan Deobandī. He also studied under Shaykh Khalīl ʾAḥmad Sahāranpūrī. He received permission to narrate *ḥadīth* from Shaykh Ḥasb ʾAllāh al-Makkī al-Shāfiʿī, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jalīl Barrādah Madanī, Shaykh ʿUthmān ʿAbd al-Salām Dāghistānī and Sayyid ʾAḥmad al-Barzanjī. Shaykh Ḥusayn Madanī followed the Ṣūfī way under Shaykh Rashīd ʾAḥmad Gangohī. He travelled to Makkah and Madīnah with his father during the First World War. The ruler Sharīf Ḥusayn who rebelled against the Ottoman Empire later imprisoned Shaykh Ḥusayn Madanī. With his teacher, Shaykh Maḥmūd Ḥasan Deobandī, he was deported to Egypt and then to Malta where he was imprisoned for three years and two months. He was freed in 1920/1338 AH and returned to India. He began teaching *ḥadīth* and, at the same time, delivering rousing speeches against the British occupation. He was arrested a second time in June 1942 (Jumādā al-ʾĀkhar 1361 AH) and imprisoned for over two years in Murādabād and ʾIlāhabād. He was eventually freed on the 25th August 1944 (6th Ramaḍān 1363 AH). He continued speaking and working against the occupation until Independence was achieved. His teaching continued until his death on 6th December 1957 (13th Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1377 AH). Among the books he wrote are *Naqshi Ḥayāt* in two volumes, and *al-Shihāb al-Thāqib ʿalā al-Mustariq al-Kādhib*.

As we mentioned, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan went to Deoband to visit Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad Madanī and studied under him the science of *ḥadīth*. In this recollection of that visit, he refers to himself as *the young student*:

> The young student lived in the Shaykh's house. He found it a hospitable place filled with guests from all ranks and walks of life: scholars, politicians, Ṣūfiyyah, and those prepared to go to prison for their beliefs. He found his house to be a religious *khānqah*, political school, and academic club which attracted newspapers from all parts of India. Students impressed by the Shaykh and his political thinking were attracted to him as the thirsty are attracted to water. They could not find elsewhere such a selection of newspapers, and would remain in deep conversation, as some of them borrowed political books from the Shaykh's house. They thus received political training and would leave as free men prepared to rebel [against the British

occupation]. I found the meal table to be very wide at which 10, 15 or 20 people would eat, morning and evening. And I found a heart which was even wider than the table. A heart which did not become tired by the many guests and numerous delegations. It was here that I got to know the brilliant politician, Mawlānā Muḥammad Sajjād Bihārī, the deputy head of al-ʾImārah al-Sharᶜiyyah of the state of Bihār. It was here that I got to know some of the leaders of Jamᶜiyyat al-ᶜUlamāʾ and some of the teachers of Dār al-ᶜUlūm who would come to visit Shaykh al-Ḥadīth at his house.[45]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan travelled with him and recalls, contrary to the customary hardships associated with travel, that his character and conduct were even more impressive; among the personal qualities he enumerates are uprightness, abstinence in food, noble-mindedness, tireless patience, courage that never lapsed into indolence, steady vigilance in acts of obedience, and moderation. Indeed, his life "in its entirety was spent in toiling, labouring, sacrificing and striving".[46] He summarises several aspects of the great teacher's character and work in this tribute:

> The Shaykh retired from politics after the independence of India and partition. He devoted himself to teaching and education, inviting to God, and training the souls. He had no contact with the government and those affiliated with the government. The president of the country conferred an honorary degree on him in January 1954 (Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1373 AH). But he refused to accept it, saying, "It is not in accordance with the ways of my predecessors." He stayed in Deoband teaching *ḥadīth*; and travelling to different parts of India he called upon the Muslims to hold on to ʾIslām, follow the pure Sharīᶜah, emulate the Sunnah of God's Messenger ﷺ, reform their ways, and engage in abundant remembrance of God. God enabled hearts and souls to align themselves with him, and embedded love for him among the people of righteousness. They thus turned to him individually and in crowds. People from all walks of life fell upon him, invitations poured onto him and he accepted them with a pure heart, bearing many hardships in fulfilling these invitations. Heart disease and blood pressure eventually overtook him. He stopped all his travels for a short while and stayed at home. He remained engrossed in his daily devotions, continued tirelessly in teaching and education, in honouring his guests and meeting those who came to visit him. He was completely given over to humility, gentleness, turning devotedly to God and preparing himself to meet Him."[47]

Influences on his intellectual development

A number of the *ʾAʾimmah* of the past and modern times were a significant and enduring influence on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's thinking and intellectual development. This he well understood and he authored studies, and lengthy

[45] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 29-30. See also p. 32.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

books about these men.[48] In this chapter I present biographical notes on seven of them in the light of their impact on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan.

Thinkers and reformers

ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal

ʾImām ʾAbū ᶜAbd ʾAllāh ʾAḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī was born in 780/164 AH. He studied under ʾImām Hushaym ibn Bashīr, ʾImām Sufyān ibn ᶜUyaynah, ʾImām Wakīᶜ ibn al-Jarrāḥ, ʾImām Yaḥyā ibn Saᶜīd al-Qaṭṭān, ʾImām ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī, ʾImām Yaḥyā ibn ʾAbī Zāʾidah and others of their level. The great experts of *ḥadīth*, ʾImām al-Bukhārī, ʾImām Muslim, ʾImām ʾAbū Dāwūd, and a great number of other scholars narrated from ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. He died in 855/241 AH. His marks of intelligence and virtue were so apparent even in childhood that some remarked, "I spend money on my children and procure the services of qualified people to teach them manners but I do not see them succeeding. Yet just look at this young orphan ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal!"

ᶜAbd ʾAllāh ibn ʾAḥmad said, "I heard ʾAbū Zurᶜah al-Rāzī say, 'Your father used to memorize *ʾaḥādīth*.' Someone asked him: 'How do you know?' He replied, 'I revised with him and I learnt certain chapters from him.'" ʾIbrāhīm al-Ḥarbī said, "When I saw ʾAḥmad, it seemed to me that God had blessed him with the knowledge of all the people of former and latter times." ʾAbū ᶜUbayd said, "I did not come across anyone having more knowledge of the Sunnah than ʾAḥmad." al-Shāfiᶜī was so impressed by him that he said, "When I left Baghdad, I did not leave behind anyone more intelligent and more pious that Ibn Ḥanbal."

The trial that he went through is well-known. He came out of it like a newly proofed, polished sword; one of his contemporaries said, "He was put into the furnace and he came out pure as gold." After that, he continued to progress to still higher levels of service to the Muslim community. People

[48] ʾUstādh ʾAḥmad al-Shirbāṣī's says in his introduction to *Mādhā Khasir al-ᶜĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn*, p. 34, "On one occasion I asked him [Shaykh Nadwī] about past scholars who had impacted on him. He replied, 'ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. He was well known for the firm position he adopted during the *miḥnah, inquisition* against those who rejected the doctrine that the Qurʾān was *created*; Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ibn Taymiyyah; Shaykh ʾAḥmad Sirhindī who passed away in 1624/1034 AH, author of many books on the Sharīᶜah, the Reality (*al-Ḥaqīqah*), and combating innovations, and the reviver of the ʾIslāmic community; Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī who passed away in 1762/1176 AH, the great ʾIslāmic researcher and author of the book, *Ḥujjat ʾAllāh al-Bālighah*; Sayyid ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜIrfān Shahīd, the founder of the first ʾIslāmic state in India in the thirteenth century AH; this state lasted for several months until the British occupiers attacked and put an end to it."

loved him and love for him became a distinguishing mark of ʾAhl al-Sunnah and ʾAhl al-Ṣalāḥ (the People of the Sunnah and the People of Rectitude). Qutaybah ibn Saʿīd said, "If you see a person having love for ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, you must conclude that he is a person of the Sunnah." And Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī said:

> The secret behind ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's greatness does not lie in his defence of one of the beliefs of ʾIslām and his victory in this regard. His merit in regard to that is unquestionable. Rather, it was his immense contribution that earned him the mantle of renewal. It was the fact that he stood as an immovable barrier when this ʾIslāmic community (*ʾummah*) was heading towards a reckless philosophical concept. Had this philosophical concept gained control over this ʾIslāmic community, its connection with the first foundations of ʾIslām and the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ would gradually have become severed. It would have submitted to all kinds of philosophies and become a target of all kinds of opinions and inferences. The state would have gained victory over society, politics would have achieved an eternal victory over religion, and the freedom of opinion and beliefs would have been snatched away.
>
> There is no doubt that this would have been a heavy loss and a mighty tribulation in ʾIslām. ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal put an end to this philosophy in its early stages when it was still on the rise. He safeguarded this religion from fools who would play with it, and from power and base opinions which would seek to control it. He safeguarded this ʾIslāmic community from falling into the lap of young, rebellious, irresponsible kings and their lackeys who would impose ideologies upon it as if they were taxes, and herd it towards their base desires as they herd sheep and cattle. He returned to the ʾIslāmic ideology its honour and originality, and to the ʾIslāmic community its freedom and identity. He thus deserved the appreciation of humanity and the praise of the Muslims, acknowledgement of the forthcoming generations, and the respect and tribute of history. He was among the senior revivers in ʾIslām.[49]

Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ibn Taymiyyah

Shaykh al-ʾIslām Taqī al-Dīn ʾAbū al-ʿAbbās ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm ibn Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī (1263-1328/662-729 AH) is esteemed as one of the greatest ʾIslāmic scholars, thinkers and reformers of his time. He devoted his entire life and energy to knowledge, teaching, *jihād*, reform, commanding good and forbidding evil. He excelled in all the sciences of his day, *Fiqh* and *ʾUṣūl al-Fiqh*, *Ḥadīth*, *Tafsīr*, scholastic theology and philosophy. He was gifted with a prodigious memory, extraordinary mental energy, outstanding debating skills, and prolific authorship. He was qualified and authorised to give *fatāwah* and teach ʾIslāmic sciences before he had reached the age of twenty. His thinking and struggle were characterised by a profound grasp of the Sharīʿah as a whole, its principles and objectives, its balance, moderation and flexibility, and by his throughly informed understanding of the circumstances

[49] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwah fī al-ʾIslām* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 5 vols., 2002), vol. 1, pp. 217-18.

and realites of his era, which enabled him to identify priorities, the greater good or the lesser evil, to choose and advocate the right course of action and make the right judgement in complex situations. His intellectual and physical courage, his absolute incorruptibility and honesty, and his independence of mind and heart won him numerous disciples, and a whole generation of scholars who carried on his work. A few from among his many written works are: *Darʾ Taʿāruḍ al-ʿAql wa al-Naql*, *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ li man Baddal Dīn al-Masīḥ*, *Rafʿ al-Malām ʿan al-ʾAʾimmah al-ʾAʿlām* and *al-Ṣārim al-Maslūl ʿalā Shātim al-Rasūl*. His impact on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was so great and so impressive that Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan devoted the entire second volume of *Saviours of the ʾIslāmic Spirit* to explaining Ibn Taymiyyah's achievements.

ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-ʾAḥad Sirhindī

The learned Shaykh ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-ʾAḥad al-ʿUmarī Sirhindī (1563-1624/971-1034 AH) was born in Sirhind in Punjab. He studied different sciences under the senior scholars of his time and paid particular attention to his spiritual training. He grew up during the rule of the Emperor Akbar who, under the influence of evil-minded scholars, was openly hostile to ʾIslām and the rule of ʾIslām. Upon his death in 1605/1014 AH his son Jahāngīr succeeded him. Jahāngīr, less malicious and fanatical than his father, was not antagonistic to ʾIslām. He was easy-going and frivolous in the style of rulers before and since. Shaykh Sirhindī took his opportunity to expand his activities and attempted to influence the mind of Jahāngīr and his courtiers. He strove to rebuild the people's connection with ʾIslām, to urge the supremacy of rule by the Sharīʿah, and to protect the religion from the distortions of extremists, the lies of impostors, the misguiding interpretations of ignoramuses, and the blasphemies of pantheistic existentialist Ṣūfiyyah. In sum, he took on the challenge of turning the powerful Mughal state away from atheism and the doctrines and practices of other religions, persuading the followers of Brahmanism to embrace ʾIslām.

His confidence in ʾIslāmic beliefs and his zeal in their defence can be gauged from the sharp riposte sent to a contemporary scholar who had cited in his book this statement of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Yamānī, "God knows the unseen and His knowledge encompasses the totalities but not the details." Shaykh ʾAḥmad Sirhindī wrote, "My brother! I refuse to listen to such statements. The blood in my Fārūqī veins pulses and flows on irrespective of whether the person who made this statement is ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Yamānī or Muḥīy al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī. Our leader and guide is Muḥammad al-ʿArabī ﷺ and not Muḥīy al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī. The Madīnan victories (*al-Futūḥāt al-Madaniyyah*) have made us independent of the Makkan victories (*al-Futūḥāt*

al-Makkiyyah), the title of Ibn ᶜArabī's book. Our link is with the source texts (*nuṣūṣ*) and not with the segments (*fuṣūṣ*)."[50]

In the light of his knowledge and experience, Shaykh Sirhindī considered three ways of dealing with the trial of atheism in the era of Akbar: leave state and society to their own devices while he withdrew from the world to retreat in a *khānqah*; take a militant stance and urge rebellion against the state so as to change its ruler; establish constructive personal relationsips with courtiers and supporters of the ruler and seek to influence them on matters related to the government and administration. He chose to address his pleas for reform to senior figures of the imperial royal court. By the force of his expressions and his fiery sentiments, he kindled in many a passion for ᵓIslām. Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan was impressed by his approach and we find him continually resorting to it in his own programme of action. He devoted the whole of the third volume of *Saviours of the ᵓIslāmic Spirit* to Shaykh Sirhindī.

ᵓImām Walī ᵓAllāh Dihlawī

ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm al-ᶜUmarī, popularly known as Shāh Walī ᵓAllāh Dihlawī (1702-62/1114-76 AH) was born in Delhi towards the end of the rule of the righteous emperor, Aurangzeb. He was brought up in a family dedicated to knowledge and virtue. His father was a great ᵓIslāmic scholar who took part in referencing *al-Fatāwā al-Hindiyyah*, a huge compendium of rulings of the Ḥanafī school, supervised by Aurangzeb.

He studied under the guidance of his father, memorising the Qurᵓān by the age of seven years, then turning to the study of the Arabic and Persian languages. As well as Qurᵓānic sciences, *ḥadīth*, and Ḥanafī *fiqh*, he studied medicine, logic and philosophy. He was inclined to asceticism and *taṣawwuf* from an early age. This effort of self-purification gave extraordinary strength and devotion to his worship and acts of obedience to God's commands. God removed from his heart, love for this world and its attractions and the hearts of people accordingly rallied around him. He began teaching after the death of his father in 1718/1131 AH. His intelligence and proficiency in the sciences of the Sharīᶜah were well established and, despite his relative youth, those in quest of knowledge came to him for training in *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*. He spent twelve years teaching in Dehli, and then went to Ḥijāz for *ḥajj*. He remained there for some time, studying with the jurists and *ḥadīth* scholars in Makkah, who authorised him to narrate *ḥadīth*. He returned to India at the beginning of the year 1732/1145 AH to resume a life of teaching and instruction.

[50] ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-ᵓAḥad Sirhindī, *Maktubāti ᵓImām Rabbānī* (Karachi: Maṭbaᶜ Educational, 3 vols., 1977), vol. 1, letter no. 10 to Shaykh Mullā Ḥasan Kashmīrī; see also ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daᶜwah fī al-ᵓIslām*, vol. 3, p. 249. Additionally, *fuṣūṣ* is mentioned as an allusion to Ibn ᶜArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.

The India that greeted him had, for Muslims, deteriorated; their rulers were weaker; innovations and fabricated customs were spreading among them. He found the courage to proclaim the truth, to advise the rulers, and to guide the people to the Straight Path. He undertook to purify *taṣawwuf* of the un-ᵓIslāmic teachings that it had accrued and restore its authentic ᵓIslāmic practices and colouring. He announced the opening of the door of *ᵓijtihād*. Hundreds of students studied *ḥadīth* under him and they revived the Sunnah after it had come to the verge of death in India. God blessed him with success and he was also able to bequeath more than fifty books to posterity. The most famous of them are: *Ḥujjat ᵓAllāh al-Bālighah fī ᵓAsrār al-Ḥadīth wa al-Ḥikam al-Tashrīᶜ*, *al-ᵓInṣāf bi Bayān Sabab al-ᵓIkhtilāf*, *ᶜIqd al-Jīd fī ᵓAḥkām al-ᵓIjtihād wa al-Taqlīd*, *al-Fawz al-Kabīr fī ᵓUṣūl al-Tafsīr*, *al-Musawwā min ᵓAḥādīth al-Muwaṭṭā*, and *Sharḥ Tarājim ᵓAbwāb al-Bukhārī*. He translated the Qurᵓān into Persian, titled *Fatḥ al-Raḥmān fī Tarjumah al-Qurᵓān*. As well as these splendid works, the Shaykh left behind four very able, learned and dedicated sons: ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz, who took his place in knowledge and deeds, Rafīᶜ al-Dīn, ᶜAbd al-Qādir and ᶜAbd al-Ghanī. Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī devoted the fourth volume of *Saviours of the ᵓIslāmic Spirit* to Shāh Walī ᵓAllāh Dihlawī.

Sayyid ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜIrfān Shahīd

Sayyid ᵓAḥmad ibn Muḥammad ᶜIrfān was born on 28th November 1786 (6th Ṣafar 1201 AH) in the village of Raebareli in north-eastern India. He grew up in the pious scholarly family that we have already mentioned, the one into which Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan was also born. Initially Sayyid ᵓAḥmad was less inclined to scholarship than martial activities. His father passed away when he was seventeen years old. At that age he travelled to Lucknow and enlisted in the military with one of the Muslim leaders. However, he was soon attracted to the madrasah of Shāh Walī ᵓAllāh Dihlawī and travelled to Delhi in 1806/1221 AH and studied there under the two sons of Walī ᵓAllāh, ᶜAbd al-Qādir and ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz al-Dihlawī.

He began his call for reform in 1817/1232 AH, urging Muslims to adhere to their religion and to abandon innovations and fabricated customs. Two high-ranking scholars, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy and Shāh ᵓIsmāᶜīl, from the family of Walī ᵓAllāh Dihlawī pledged allegiance to him in *daᶜwah* and *jihād*. Thousands of people desirous of returning to the injunctions of ᵓIslām responded to his call, and did so despite the efforts of the British to distance people from the Straight Path. A large number of Hindus also embraced ᵓIslām. At this time Sayyid ᵓAḥmad set out for *ḥajj* with seventy of his followers in 1820/1236 AH; this was an important gesture at a time when the understanding of *ḥajj* as a primary obligation had weakened in India following the circulation of certain juristic opinions claiming that, for the Muslims of India, this

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obligation had lapsed on account of the ocean and other dangers they faced in trying to discharge it.

Having acquired a large following of supporters from all over India, Sayyid ʾAḥmad prepared to rescue the Muslim-majority region of Punjāb from Sikh rule. Ranjit Singh, the Sikh leader, ruled Punjab directly and ruled some territories on the northwestern borders of India indirectly through local chieftains. On 18th December 1825 (7th Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1241 AH) Sayyid ʾAḥmad set out with his followers to secure a base of operations in those same border areas. They suffered many hardships and adversities before eventually reaching Peshawar. They were able to defeat the local ruler, Sulṭān Muḥammad Khān, who was acting on behalf of the Sikhs, and establish their base in Peshawar. Chieftains, tribal elders and senior scholars came to Sayyid ʾAḥmad and pledged allegiance to him and his cause. He carried out his responsibilities as head of a state by appointing judges to implement the Sharīʿah. He sent a message to Ranjit Singh, offering him the choice of embracing ʾIslām, paying the *jizyah* or war. In the ensuing battles the *mujāhidūn* showed spectacular resolve, courage and sacrifice and won victories that revived memories of past ʾIslāmic conquests.

However, the state established by Sayyid ʾAḥmad ibn ʿIrfān did not last. The enemies of ʾIslām were able to exploit private differences among Muslims and circulate the poison of unfounded rumours. Some erstwhile followers turned away from Sayyid ʾAḥmad or joined his enemies. He and the loyal *mujāhidūn* were forced to withdraw to the valley of Kashmir where local leaders promised to help and defend them. Some traitors among them betrayed their plans to the Sikhs who lauched a surprise attack near Balakot on 6th May 1831 (24th Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1246 AH). The resulting confusion in Muslim ranks enabled the Sikhs to reach the main lines of the *mujāhidūn*. Many of them were martyred, including their leader Sayyid ʾAḥmad ibn ʿIrfān, and his companion, ʾIsmāʿīl ibn ʿAbd al-Ghanī Dihlawī, a descendent of ʾImām Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī.

Despite the failure of this *jihād*, the example of it served as a beacon of hope for Muslim resistance to the machinations of the British. Shaykh Nadwī was most impressed by Sayyid ʾAḥmad. The very first book that he wrote in Urdu was on the life, *daʿwah* and *jihād* of Sayyid ʾAḥmad. He wrote another in Arabic, titled *ʾIdhā Habbat Rīḥ al-ʾĪmān*, and he made frequent reference to incidents from the history of this *jihād* in many of his other works.

Muḥammad ʾIlyās Kāndhalawī

Muḥammad ʾIlyās ibn Muḥammad ʾIsmāʿīl Kāndhalawī (1885-1943/1302-61 AH) was born to a Kāndhala family long steeped in religious scholarship, *daʿwah*, and strict *tawḥīd*. He knew the Qurʾān by heart, studied *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* under Shaykh Maḥmūd Ḥasan Deobandī, and other authentic *ḥadīth* collections under his brother, Shaykh Muḥammad

Yaḥyā Kāndhalawī. Strongly religious by temperament, he preoccupied himself in worship and devotion until, in the Niẓām al-Dīn Masjid in Delhi, God inspired him to engage in *daʿwah*.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan visited Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIlyās in his home and accompanied him on his journeys. He remembers him as frail, with sharp, penetrating eyes that indicated a deep resolve; he was no orator, indeed he sometimes had a stutter, yet he moved people because "his entire being displayed spirit, vigour, courage, and conviction". He appeared to always be in pain as though "walking on thorny plants", "like someone bitten by a snake". This pain arose from the negligence he saw around him, the inability of human beings to remember how weighty a purpose human life carries, and how grave the consequences are of failing in that purpose. His own realisation of that purpose was firm and constant:

> His faith in the message brought by the Messengers ﷺ differed clearly from our faith, like the difference between a picture and the reality. His faith in the realities of ʾIslām was more intense and more deep rooted than our faith in the material things and experiences of our life. Anything that was confirmed in the Sharīʿah and established from the Qurʾān and Sunnah was a reality for him in which he had absolutely no doubt whatsoever. It was as though he was seeing the Garden and the Fire with his very eyes."[51]

The great achievement of Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIlyās was his willingness to devote himself utterly to the work of *daʿwah*, and so he inspired in others a sincerity that drew them in crowds to a *daʿwah* movement that became ever stronger on a national and international scale. He was in effect the personal guide of a whole generation. Everything changed for Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan after he met this man. He too applied himself to become aware of and care about the faith and relgious practice of the great mass of Muslims. He set about making contact with the people all over India, undertaking month-long journeys for the purpose of *daʿwah* to many villages and cities of India. He became known and popular in different parts of India. He was always mindful of what he owed to Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIlyās:

> The person who had the greatest impact on me was [...] Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIlyās Kāndhalawī. [...] He called to establishing a direct link with the masses and focusing the *daʿwah* on them. His direction and attention was turned solely towards the message of God, practising ʾIslām, its Sharīʿah and its injunctions. This *daʿwah* spread not in India alone, but to the Asian continent. It then spread to Europe and America. It is still ongoing and it has had the greatest impact and produced the most success.[52]

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[51] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 15-16.
[52] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Mujtamaʿ*, issue no. 1338 (Kuwait; March, 1997).

ʾImām Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ

ʾImām Shahīd Ḥasan ibn ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bannāʾ (1906-49/1323-68 AH) was born in al-Maḥmūdiyyah, near Alexandria. He studied at the Dār al-ʿUlūm in Cairo and qualified as a schoolteacher. He travelled to different towns and got to know the inhabitants, their circumstances and way of life. He settled down as a teacher in al-ʾIsmāʿīliyyah. There he confided what was in his heart to certain individuals who pledged to join him in raising the banner of ʾIslām. Thus began the movement of al-ʾIkhwān al-Muslimīn, whose first General Secretary, Shaykh Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ, established its first centre in Alexandria. They swiftly published reading materials and invited people to lessons and lectures. Then the state of Israel was imposed upon the people of Palestine and their long catastrophe began. The Ikhwān were the most energetic of the military units that went to fight this terrible crime against humanity. As a direct consequence, the Ikhwān movement was repressed by the Egyptian government, and Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ was assassinated. The introduction to his posthumously published memoirs, *Mudhakkarāt al-Daʿwah wa al-Dāʿiyah*, was written by Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan.

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī explains how Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ was uniquely able to answer the need of the Muslims at that time:

> The condition of the Muslim world in general and the condition of Egypt and the Arab world in particular was in need of a man of insightful thinking, sharp perception, overflowing *ʾīmān*, firm determination, and complete awareness of the illnesses and pains which the ʾIslāmic community was experiencing, able to diagnose the illness and prescribe the medication, with the perseverance to see to his patient and to transport him from illness to recovery, and from there to the threshold of strength. The man who was sought, the leader who was awaited, was Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ.[53]

[53] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-ʾIkhwān al-Muslimīn* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, n.d.), p. 41. Also see, from pp. 48-49, "The ʾIslāmic world was experiencing a shattering of its foundations, a tearing down of its edifice, and an organised demolition of its physical and metaphysical structures. […] It needed a new brain, a new heart, a new resolve, and new blood. It was in need of realising all these aspirations in a man who would place his hand on the hand of God, Who would illuminate the way for him and guide him to the Straight Path. […] the ʾIslāmic community needed a new man who would 'convey the messages of God and fear Him, and not fear anyone but God' (*Sūrat al-Aḥẓāb*, 33: 39). A generation was needed of 'people whom God loves, and they love Him, soft-hearted to the Muslims, stern to the unbelievers. They fight in the path of God and do not fear being censured by any' (*Sūrat al-Māʾidah*, 5: 54). A generation that fully understands Islam, believes in it, practises it, invites to it, and strives in its course. […] Only a God-inspired man can train this ʾIslāmic community and prepare it for the important responsibility which is placed on it. A man who has vowed his soul, his thoughts, his efforts and his life for God, the Sustainer of the worlds. […] A journalist posed the following question to Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ while in the presence of several others, 'Who are you?' He replied, 'I

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan shared this understanding of the quality of the man and the expectations laid upon him. He felt that no human effort, by an individual or an institution, nor any particular environmental or societal ethos, could produce a person of the calibre of Shaykh Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ. Rather, he was to be valued as a grace from God in favour of the Muslim *ʾummah*:

> He was not the product of a particular environment or school, he was not the product of history or custom, he was not the product of some effort, endeavour or toiling, he was not the product of an experiment or practice. Rather, he was from among the products of inspiration, divine wisdom, and particular concern for this religion and this ʾIslāmic community.[54]

Of the wide and amibitious programme of social and cultural reforms that, under the leadership of Shaykh Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ, the early ʾIkhwān espoused as the means of restoring the supremacy of ʾIslām in Muslim lives, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan picked out two aspects of his genius for particular praise: his total conviction in the call to ʾIslām and his sacrifice to that conviction of all the time, talent, energy and strength at his disposal; and his ability to pass that certainty and commitment to others. He had a lasting impact on the tastes, manners and perspectives of those who came into contact with him, and the movement he intitated endured through intense persecution and several setbacks in very adverse social and political conditions.[55] As noted by Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī, at the heart of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's fascination with the achievement of Shaykh Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ was its similarity to his own aspiration to combine the ways of the pious predecessors of the first century of ʾIslām with the ways of the Ṣūfiyyah.[56]

Muḥammad ʾIqbāl

Muḥammad ʾIqbāl was born in Sialkot, Punjab, on 9th November 1877 (3rd Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1294 AH). His roots go back to a Brahmin family in Kashmīr. One of his forefathers embraced ʾIslām during the reign of Sulṭān Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (1421-73/824-77 AH). He first studied with his father and then at one of the schools in Sialkot. At secondary school, a teacher of Arabic and Persian, Mīr Ḥasan made a great impact on him and planted in him the love for culture and ʾIslāmic manners. ʾIqbāl began composing

am a traveller searching for the truth, a human with an Aladdin's lamp searching for humanity among people, I am a recluse who has perceived the secret of his existence and so proclaimed to the people: 'My *ṣalāh* and my sacrifice, and my living and my dying are for God alone, the Sustainer of the worlds' (*Sūrat al-Anʿām*, 6: 162)."

[54] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 114-15.

[55] Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ, *Mudhakkirāt al-Daʿwah wa al-Dāʿiyah* (Cairo; Dār al-Tawzīʿ wa al-Nashr al-ʾIslāmiyyah, 2002), Introduction, pp. 7-8.

[56] Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh* (Damascus; Dār al-Qalam, 2001), p. 43.

poetry at this early stage of his life and consulted the poet Mirzā Dāgh Dihlawī. He enrolled in Punjab University in 1891/1308 AH and took a masters degree in 1899/1316 AH. His philosophy teacher was Professor Thomas Arnold. After receiving his masters degree, ʾIqbāl was appointed as Arabic tutor in the Eastern College of Punjab University. He lectured in other subjects such as, history, economics and politics, and wrote a book on economics. He travelled to England in 1905/1322 AH to study for a higher degree in philosophy and economics at Cambridge University. From there he travelled to Germany and completed a doctorate in philosophy at Munich University. He returned to London and sat his final examinations in law. He affiliated himself to the London School of Economics and Politics, specialising in these two subjects. He returned to India in 1908/1326 AH. Throughout this period he had continued to write poetry, indeed, nothing could have diverted him from that.

His voice rang out in the literature and poetry assemblies of his people. His first composition, *He is an orphan*, presented at the annual meeting of the party, Ḥimāyat al-ʾIslām, in Lahore, was most warmly received. He continued to touch the hearts of the Muslims with his revolutionary and reformative compositions until his death on 21st April 1938 (20th Safar 1357 AH). By this time he had won international acclaim as a poet. Rabindranath Tagore wrote about his death, "The death of Sir Muḥammad ʾIqbāl creates a void in literature that, like a mortal wound, that will take a very long time to heal. India, whose status in the world is limited, can ill afford to lose a poet whose poetry had such universal value."[57] It was indeed a critical day for the people of India in general, and for its Muslims especially. Government departments and businesses were closed. Indian leaders and men of letters mourned his passing.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan grew up in an epoch that resounded with the poems of ʾIqbāl, their themes of love and the heart's aspiration, faith and affection, and conviction in the eternity of ʾIslām and *ʾīmān*. However, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan did not pay particular attention to ʾIqbāl's poetry until around 1934/1353 AH. He had known only *Bāng Darā* from amongst ʾIqbāl's compositions, which lacks the profundity of his later work. Only after he read *Ḍarb Kalīm* did he become captivated by ʾIqbāl, and he was still more impressed by *Bāl Jibrīl*. Its ideas and the magic of its rhythms and rhymes overpowered him, and he progressed to ʾIqbāl's other Persian compositions. He was deeply affected by the poet's thinking, its rootedness in ʾIslām and the passion that accompanied his art. His open mind and budding taste absorbed all this and he made it a resource for his own thought and work. Reading the output of other men of letters or ʾIslāmic scholars he felt that, were he able to

[57] G. J. Candreva, *ʾIqbāl and Emergent Islam*, p. 6, as cited in Nair Bhawan and Sanjeev Sudha, *Remembering Our Leaders* (New Delhi: Children's Book Trust, 1999), vol. 7, p. 39.

read as widely, he might acquire similar means of expression and might one day produce something comparable. But the words that flowed from ʾIqbāl represented a quite different order of expressive beauty and power that could never be acquired, no matter how hard one tried. It was God-given, "a divine bestowal" and "one of the never-ending gifts of God." He also understood that his affinity for the poetry of ʾIqbāl was based on its ʾIslāmic orientation and hope:

> The greatest thing which caused me to be fascinated by his poetry was yearning, love and faith. This beautiful mixture was clearly apparent in his poetry and his writing, more apparent than in the poetry of any other contemporary. I found myself to have a natural disposition for yearning, love and faith. I would plunge headlong toward every writing and message that demonstrated yearning, high aspiration, far-sightedness, desire for the leadership of ʾIslām and for this world to be subject to its righteousness and authority over the self and the horizons; prompting to belief in God and Muḥammad ﷺ, the genius of his life, the eternal nature of his message and his comprehensive leadership for all human generations. I loved ʾIqbāl and was engrossed by him as a poet of yearning, love and faith. A poet who had an ideology, a call and a message. I loved him as the greatest rebel against this materialistic Western civilisation and its greatest critic. As a person who called to the glory of ʾIslām and the leadership of the Muslims. As the greatest opponent of restrictive nationalism, and the greatest advocate of human yearning and ʾIslāmic solidarity.[58]

The books that influenced him most

Just as there were particular men, in the past or among contemporaries, whose lives, works and example had an enduring influence on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, so too, out of the hundreds of books in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English books that he read and studied closely, a few made an impression that stayed with him for the rest of his life. He recognised this himself, as is reflected in the fact that the ideas and sentiments, sometimes even the words, from these books recur frequently in his own writings.

Ṣamṣām al-ʾIslām by Sayyid ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ḥasanī

Ṣamṣām al-ʾIslām is 25,000 lines of verse translation in Urdu of al-Wāqidī's narrative of the early ʾIslāmic conquests, *Futūḥ al-Shām*. Its author, Sayyid ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ḥasanī was an uncle of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's father. The stirring rhythms and rhymes of *Ṣamṣām al-ʾIslām* were chanted in family gatherings, and ʾAbū al-Ḥasan heard them many times during his childhood. The account of the perfected *ʾīmān*, zeal, courage and sacrifice of the Companions ﷺ, men and women, fixed those qualities in his heart as the

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ideal to strive for. He recalls how the emotions and facial expressions of the listeners changed with the ebb and flow of the narrative:

> The listeners' *ʾīmān*, zeal and sentiments would be most affected when Khawlah bint al-ʾAzwar, the sister of Ḍirār, came on the battlefield. She would be on the verge of being captured by the enemy, and then she would leave the battlefield victorious, laughing at the enemy. It was at this stage that the women [listening] would be overwhelmed by admiration and delight, because she was a woman, and their eyes would be tearful from happiness.
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> […] These scenes had a greater impact on my heart than a thousand books. These gatherings were very dear to me, and this book fixed in my heart love for the Companions and *mujāhidīn*. The status of *jihād* in the cause of God became lofty in my eyes. So much so that whatever studies, arguments and objections to *jihād* I read thereafter, and whatever I read of the writings of Orientalists and Westerners, could not diminish the value of *jihād* and I never had any misgiving about this subject. It was as a poet said:
>
> Desire for her came upon me before I had known desire,
> falling thus upon a vacant heart, it took possession of it.
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> One of the merits of this book was that I began seeing the Europeans, who had come after the Romans and fought the Muslims in Syria and Palestine, as enemies of ʾIslām. My heart was never won over by them. In fact, I considered them more worthy of being treated as enemies than the Romans and Persians whose power had come to an end, whose days had passed, and whose shadow had withdrawn. As for the Europeans, they plundered the ʾIslāmic world from one end to the other, enslaved its peoples, spread corruption on land and sea, and filled the land of God with tyranny, oppression, corruption and evil. This book did me a favour which I will never forget. It most certainly planted in my heart love for the Companions of God's Messenger ﷺ, love for the early *mujāhidūn*, respect for *jihād*, and sacrificing the spirits and souls in the cause of God. It aroused my indignation against the enemies of ʾIslām and the enemies of humanity.[59]

Musaddas Ḥālī *by ʾAlṭāf Ḥusayn Ḥālī*

The word *musaddas*, meaning, *in sixes,* refers to the stanza form, three full lines and three pairs of half-lines, of the poems in this Urdu anthology composed by the scholar, poet and writer ʾAlṭāf Ḥusayn Ḥālī (1837-1914/1253-1322 AH). He presented it in the difficult period of defeat and despondency that particularly afflicted the Muslims after the failure of the uprising of 1857/1273 AH to liberate India from British occupation. There was a great need to revive pride in the glorious history and legacy of ʾIslām so that the Muslims would have the confidence to face their reality and rebuild their resources. In this anthology Alṭāf Ḥusayn recalled the early history of ʾIslām, its rise

[59] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 162-63.

and advance, and then its decline and retreat. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan recalls how intently people turned to it for solace:

> I was greatly affected by *Musaddas Ḥālī* just like thousands of others of my age who grew up in an environment like mine. I would hear my two older sisters reciting many lines from this anthology. I would hear many of my cousins, those of my age and those older than me, memorising many lines from it. Naturally I too memorised many of its lines, despite my weak memory, and I quoted many of them in my little articles and in some of the speeches that I delivered at the children's club in our village.[60]

He notes some of the weaknesses of *Musaddas Ḥālī* but affirms its positive impact on Muslims at that time, rekindling in them love for the Messenger of God ﷺ, for his Companions ؓ, and for the religion and way of life he came with. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan makes special mention of how Ḥālī's poetry attributed the dramatic transformation of the Arab people as bearers of ʾIslāmic civilisation to the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ. It was "the first book which combated" the arguments of Western historians that the Arabs of the *jāhiliyyah* were ready for the transformation to come, and that the Prophet ﷺ was merely an opportunist who saw and exploited that readiness. Such arguments try to undermine the ʾIslāmic motivations and aspirations that enobled the transformation of a nation of feuding tribes into a world power. Shaykh Nadwī recalls that when he "remembered the scene of the *jāhiliyyah* which I learnt from this book", his faith and love of ʾIslām were secured. Although later, more objective scholarship had also combated those Orientalist arguments and demonstrated their falsehood, for Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan this task had already been accomplished by *Musaddas Ḥālī*, "It is for this reason that I am indebted to this book, and I consider it to be a great favour and bounty to me."[61]

Sīrat Raḥmat li al-ʿĀlamīn *by Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaymān Manṣūrpūrī*

Sīrat Raḥmat li al-ʿĀlamīn by Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaymān Manṣūrpūrī, is among the most important studies in Urdu of the life of God's Messenger ﷺ. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan admired it immensely; it left an impression upon him at a tender age unmatched by any other work of *sīrah*. His account of its effect on him is revealing of the attentive longing and readiness for faith that Qāḍī Manṣūrpūrī brought to his reading, and which this book informed, educated and intensified:

> In the course of reading this book, I experienced a strange joy, wholly different from all the joys which I experienced in my adolescence. […] It was not the joy of eating delicious food when hungry. It was not the joy of wearing new clothes on the day

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 176-77.

ideal to strive for. He recalls how the emotions and facial expressions of the listeners changed with the ebb and flow of the narrative:

> The listeners' *ʾīmān*, zeal and sentiments would be most affected when Khawlah bint al-ʾAzwar, the sister of Ḍirār, came on the battlefield. She would be on the verge of being captured by the enemy, and then she would leave the battlefield victorious, laughing at the enemy. It was at this stage that the women [listening] would be overwhelmed by admiration and delight, because she was a woman, and their eyes would be tearful from happiness.
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The word *musaddas*, meaning, *in sixes,* refers to the stanza form, three full lines and three pairs of half-lines, of the poems in this Urdu anthology composed by the scholar, poet and writer ʾAlṭāf Ḥusayn Ḥālī (1837-1914/1253-1322 AH). He presented it in the difficult period of defeat and despondency that particularly afflicted the Muslims after the failure of the uprising of 1857/1273 AH to liberate India from British occupation. There was a great need to revive pride in the glorious history and legacy of ʾIslām so that the Muslims would have the confidence to face their reality and rebuild their resources. In this anthology Alṭāf Ḥusayn recalled the early history of ʾIslām, its rise

[59] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 162-63.

and advance, and then its decline and retreat. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan recalls how intently people turned to it for solace:

> I was greatly affected by *Musaddas Ḥālī* just like thousands of others of my age who grew up in an environment like mine. I would hear my two older sisters reciting many lines from this anthology. I would hear many of my cousins, those of my age and those older than me, memorising many lines from it. Naturally I too memorised many of its lines, despite my weak memory, and I quoted many of them in my little articles and in some of the speeches that I delivered at the children's club in our village.[60]

He notes some of the weaknesses of *Musaddas Ḥālī* but affirms its positive impact on Muslims at that time, rekindling in them love for the Messenger of God ﷺ, for his Companions ﷺ, and for the religion and way of life he came with. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan makes special mention of how Ḥālī's poetry attributed the dramatic transformation of the Arab people as bearers of ʾIslāmic civilisation to the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ. It was "the first book which combated" the arguments of Western historians that the Arabs of the *jāhiliyyah* were ready for the transformation to come, and that the Prophet ﷺ was merely an opportunist who saw and exploited that readiness. Such arguments try to undermine the ʾIslāmic motivations and aspirations that enobled the transformation of a nation of feuding tribes into a world power. Shaykh Nadwī recalls that when he "remembered the scene of the *jāhiliyyah* which I learnt from this book", his faith and love of ʾIslām were secured. Although later, more objective scholarship had also combated those Orientalist arguments and demonstrated their falsehood, for Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan this task had already been accomplished by *Musaddas Ḥālī*, "It is for this reason that I am indebted to this book, and I consider it to be a great favour and bounty to me."[61]

Sīrat Raḥmat li al-ʿĀlamīn *by Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaymān Manṣūrpūrī*

Sīrat Raḥmat li al-ʿĀlamīn by Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaymān Manṣūrpūrī, is among the most important studies in Urdu of the life of God's Messenger ﷺ. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan admired it immensely; it left an impression upon him at a tender age unmatched by any other work of *sīrah*. His account of its effect on him is revealing of the attentive longing and readiness for faith that Qāḍī Manṣūrpūrī brought to his reading, and which this book informed, educated and intensified:

> In the course of reading this book, I experienced a strange joy, wholly different from all the joys which I experienced in my adolescence. […] It was not the joy of eating delicious food when hungry. It was not the joy of wearing new clothes on the day

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 176-77.

of ʿId. It was not the joy of toys when wanting to play with them. It was not the joy of holidays and free time after difficult studies and tiring occupations. It was not the joy of success in a competition. It was not the joy of a visit from an old friend or an honourable guest. It was in no way similar to these joys. It is a joy whose taste I recognise but cannot describe. I acknowledge that I still cannot describe it accurately, and cannot express it with a single word. The most that I can say is this, it is the joy of the spirit.

[…] I would read the story of someone from Quraysh embracing ʾIslām. As a result, various kinds of torments would befall him. He would bear all these with fortitude and patience. In fact, he would bear them joyfully and happily. I would thus realise that there is a joy that many affluent and powerful people do not know about, that many who are considered fortunate do not know about. It is the joy of enduring pain while being beaten for proclaiming the truth, persecuted for holding a certain belief, humiliated in the cause of a particular message. The joy of power, victory and authority can never equal this joy. I found myself hoping to experience the fortune of this joy and this honour, even if only once in my life.

I read the story of Muṣʿab ibn ʿUmayr ﷺ a model of elegant luxury for the people, one who lived a life of pomp, a spoilt youth from Quraysh. When he goes about in Makkah, he wears clothes valued in hundreds. Youngsters follow him. He is the talk of the town. He then places his hand in the hand of the Messenger of God ﷺ. He quits all that comfort and luxury; he puts on coarse clothing and adopts an ascetic life; on occasions he is forced to use a thorn to keep his wrap in place. The sight brings tears to the eyes of the Messenger of God ﷺ, who thinks of the comfortable and luxurious life that Muṣʿab ﷺ had been accustomed to. This youth is then killed in the battle of ʾUḥud. He leaves behind nothing but a garment so short that if his head was covered by it, his feet became exposed, and if his feet were covered, his head became exposed. So the Messenger of God ﷺ said: 'Cover his head and use straw to cover his feet.'

[…] I read the story of the Emigration of God's Messenger ﷺ. I do not know that I have ever read any story that made a greater impression on me than this story, which the author narrated with honesty and simplicity. The Messenger of God ﷺ is entering Madīnah when the hearts of the people had already become attached to him, and eyes were longing to see him. […] While reading all this I find that my heart has left me and it has accompanied the camel of the Messenger of God ﷺ. It is entering Madīnah with the procession of the Messenger of God ﷺ. I find myself witnessing all this with my own eyes.

[…] I read from the story of the battle of ʾUḥud. History does not know a story greater, more astonishing, more beautiful for its loyalty, sincerity, bravery, faith, conviction and nobility of character. My heart trembled with the response of ʾAnas ibn al-Naḍr ﷺ to those who sat down and threw up their hands, saying that the Messenger of God ﷺ has been killed. ʾAnas ibn al-Naḍr ﷺ asked them, "So what are you going to do with your lives after his death? Die for the cause for which the Messenger of God ﷺ died!" My heart trembled with the statement of the one who said, "Most certainly I sense the fragrance of the Garden beyond mount ʾUḥud." Also of the person whose last wish was to see the Messenger of God ﷺ before departing this world. The Companions ﷺ carried him while he was in the throes of death and he took his final breath at the feet of God's Messenger ﷺ. […] And many other incidents displaying love and sacrifice. In this way, I kept on reading this book. At

times I would be overtaken by crying, and at times I would be overcome with happiness and joy.

The favour of this book and its sincere author, which I will never forget, is that it instilled a deep love in my heart, a love after which there is no joy in life, a love without which life has no value. The Persian poet was correct when he said, "May God destroy that day which passes without my tasting the joy of love. To hell with that life if I spend it all under the tyranny of my intelligence being subjected to logic."[62]

al-Fārūq *by Shiblī Nuʿmānī*

This comprehensive and authoritative biography of ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīn ʿUmar al-Fārūq ﷺ is regarded as one of the jewels of ʿAllāmah Shiblī Nuʿmān's literary works. The *ʿulamāʾ* consider it to surpass all other books on the life of ʿUmar ﷺ. It has been published numerous times in Urdu and translated into Arabic, English, Persian and Turkish.

Shaykh Nuʿmānī referred to many authoritative sources, including *ḥadīth* compilations. He had already studied the historical writings of ʿAbd ʾAllāh ibn Salīm, ʾAḥmad ibn ʾAbī Yaʿqūb, ʾAḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, ʾAbū Jaʿfar ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, Ibn al-ʾAthīr, al-Samʿānī, al-Dhahabī, ʾAbū al-Fidāʾ, and al-Suyūṭī. He travelled to the major libraries in the ʾIslāmic world and in the major European capitals to gather as much information as he could. He even read the accounts of famous Western writers like Carlyle, as well as Western historians.

Shaykh Nadwī was moved and impressed by this book. He wrote:

> I was enthralled by its faithful and captivating presentation. I read it several times. The effect of the battles of Iraq, al-Buwayb, al-Jisr, al-Qādisiyyah, by the pen of ʿAllāmah Shiblī Nuʿmānī with his short, simple, captivating and unaffected sentences surpasses the effect of the continuous poetic lines of al-Firdawsī, and the flowery, inflated and exaggerated words he used. The magnificent words of al-Fārūq and the ardour of his discourse and expressions descend like a thunderbolt […]. The effort which the ʿAllāmah put into defending the system of the *Khilāfah* was beyond my comprehension and understanding at that time. As a scholar it still concerns me to this day.[63] But the part related to stories and incidents had a deep impact on me in those days. Some of that impact remains with me.[64]

ʿUlamāʾ al-Salaf *by Nawāb Mawlānā Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān*

ʿUlamāʾ al-Salaf was written by Nawāb Mawlānā Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Shīrwānī (d. 1950/1369 AH), one of the founders of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. Shaykh ʾAbū

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Other influential books

Among the few other books that had an enduring effect on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, were:

***Zād al-Maʿād fī Hady Khayr al-ʿIbād* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah.** He thought of this book as an essential travelling companion, which served him as a sufficient library of ʾIslāmic knowledge, as a teacher and guide he could always refer to. From it he learnt the method of performing the *ṣalāh* as related from God's Messenger ﷺ, the various supplications related from him ﷺ, the etiquette of travel, and how to spend one's days and nights in the light of the Prophet's Sunnah.

***Qiyām al-Layl* by Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī al-Baghdādi,** one of the students of ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, this book appeals directly to ones heart, awakening it to the love and service of God. It brings together stories of how the believers pondered the Qurʾān and strove to understand it, and the merits and benefits of spending the night in worship. This book helped Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan to remain devoted to his studies and worship.

He mentions the commentary on ***Sūrat al-Nūr* by Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ibn Taymiyyah** as very beneficial during the years of adolescence, when he might have been vulnerable to pernicious ideas and influences in the environment around him. It strengthened him in his adherence to the religious norms and

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moral values of ʾIslām. So too did ***al-Jawāb al-Kāfī ʿan al-Dawāʾ al-Shāfī* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah**, one of Ibn Taymiyyah's greatest students.

The book which established in him respect for books, teachers and the correct manners needed to benefit from both, is the little treatise ***Taʿlīm al-Mutaʿallim* by Burhān al-Dīn al-Zanūjī**, a student of al-Marghinānī, the author of *al-Hidāyah*.

***ʾIslām at the Crossroads* by Muḥammad ʾAsad** gave him insight into Western culture, its shortcomings and the impossibility of its temperament reconciling with that of ʾIslāmic culture; it showed him, from the perspective of religious faith, the deep-rooted divergences between the two ways of living.

***Bayn al-Dīn wa al-ʿAql* by ʾUstādh ʿAbd al-Bārī Nadwī,** professor of modern philosophy at the ʿUthmānī University in Hyderabad, impressed Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan with its refined and balanced account of the boundaries between what we can know by reason and what we can know from tradition. ʿAbd al-Bārī Nadwī contrasted the limitations and instability of human experience and human knowledge with the authoritative knowledge of the Prophets and Messengers ﷺ, its source in divine revelation and inspiration, and its remoteness from doubt.[67]

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III. HIS LEARNING

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's learning in the Qurʾānic sciences, the Sunnah, ʾIslāmic jurisprudence, history, and in the literature written in Arabic, English, Persian and Urdu, meant that he was able to bring to bear a wealth and breadth of learning to his work as a *dāʿī*, unique in his time. His merit in this regard was acknowledged by his peers. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī considered him an example of one who combined comprehensive knowledge of traditional ʾIslāmic scholarship with "the beneficial of the modern [...] firmly embedded *ʾīmān* with wide knowledge".[68] Dr Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Bahjat wrote, "Shaykh Nadwī can compare with the small group of *ʿulamāʾ* like Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328/728 AH), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 1350/750 AH) and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 1071/463 AH), as regards his wide-ranging education and varied participation in the fields of the principles of religion, comparative knowledge of religions, the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, biography and history, *daʿwah* and belief, literature and the appreciation thereof. His early education provided him with this diversity enabling him to enter into the different fields of ʾIslāmic and human sciences through a wide door."[69]

The Qurʾān

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was particular about recitation of the Qurʾān. He recited it abundantly himself and listened to it from expert readers. Each time he read it or listened to it, it affected him in the way as described in the Qurʾān itself, "God revealed the best speech, a Book, in harmony with itself and oft-repeated, whereat the hairs stand on end on the skins of those who fear their Lord" (*Sūrat al-Zumar*, 39: 23); "Whose faith increases when His words are recited to them, and they place their trust in their Lord" (*Sūrat al-ʾAnfāl*, 8: 2). Shaykh Nadwī would recite the Qurʾān with true awe and presence. It was his constant companion, his fundamental support, such that every talk or lecture he gave began with verses from it, for inspiration and guidance, and to derive meanings and hidden treasures from them. He was engaged in the recitation of the Qurʾān when his death came. He said that it often happened to him that he would not know how to begin a talk until the *Qārī* (reciter) on the occasion began reciting verses from the Qurʾān. This helped him, he used to say, because he knew that those verses were addressed to him before others, perhaps even chosen for him.

[68] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil ʾAʿlām*, p. 79.

[69] *Majallāt al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 56.

The Qurʾān

He attributed his devotion to the Qurʾān and Qurʾānic studies to his mother who had memorised the entire Qurʾān; to his teachers, Shaykh Khalīl ibn Muḥammad al-Yamānī, al-Khawājah ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Fārūqī, Mawlānā ʾAḥmad ʿAlī Lahawrī, Shaykh Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad Madanī, ʿAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, ʾUstādh ʿAbd al-Mājid al-Daryābādī and Mawlānā Manāẓir ʾAḥsan al-Jīlānī; and to his appointment as a lecturer in Arabic literature and Qurʾānic exegesis at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. He was thus provided with all the means of studying the Qurʾān, looking into it and pondering its meanings. For him the Qurʾān was a living book, a spoken message, a mirror in which individuals and nations can see themselves and get a sense of their inner worth; an account of the rise and fall of nations, lands and civilisations. His writings on the Qurʾān comprise: firstly, his explanation of different verses, scattered in his various writings; secondly, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Qurʾāniyyah*, Introduction to Qurʾānic Studies; and thirdly, *al-Ṣirāʿ Bayn al-ʾĪmān wa al-Māddiyyah: Taʾmmulāt fī Sūrat al-Kahf*, The Struggle Between Faith and Materialism: Meditations on *Sūrat al-Kahf*.

His *Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Qurʾāniyyah* is a collection of his lectures at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ following his appointment as lecturer in Qurʾānic *tafsīr* in 1934/1353 AH. He explains that, before studying the Qurʾān, it is necessary to understand the unique attributes and qualities of the Book, its sciences and prophecies, its miraculous nature and its wide scope. Similarly, it is necessary to be clear about what the most fundamental and principal concern of the Qurʾān is, so that the student has some sense of its horizons and depths and can begin to answer questions like: *how does the Qurʾān lead humanity from darkness to light?*; *how does it build a relation between creature and Creator?*; *what are its distinctive qualities, as compared to previous divine Books, in respect of its originality, its being safe from interpolation and alteration, and its influencing human hearts and societies, holding sway over them, maturing and forming them?*; *how have its sciences stood the test of time in the face of new discoveries?*; *how far have its prophecies been realised?* Shaykh Nadwī's book also guides students as to which qualities and conditions offer the most help for one to benefit from the Qurʾān, and which hinder and prevent one from doing so.[70]

His *Ṣirāʿ Bayn al-ʾĪmān wa al-Māddiyyah* is a scholarly exposition of the four stories that are the vehicle for the wisdom, guidance and admonitions of *Sūrat al-Kahf*. Shaykh Nadwī argues that, in different ways, these stories represent the struggle between people of faith, who believe in God and the unseen, and people who reject faith and rest all their hopes and efforts on the material world and whatever is subservient to it. Shaykh Nadwī's reading of this sūrah sheds light on the belief, psychology, morals and conduct that result

[70] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā al-Dirāsāt al-Qurʾāniyyah* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿIlmī, 1994), pp. 4-6.

from these opposed systems or ideologies, and he traces their effects through ʾIslāmic history and into modern times. This work first appeared in issues of *al-Muslimūn* (1957-58/1376-77 AH), published in Geneva. It attracted a good deal of attention and admiration in academic and ʾIslāmic circles. It prompted many readers to ponder the sūrah anew, persuaded them of a strong and deep connection between its themes and the tribulations of Muslims in this century and how to deal with them. It presents a fine account of the temperament of the civilisation whose seeds were sown in the Europe of the seventeenth century and whose fruits have reached the stage of fermentation in the twentieth century; it notes the particular characteristics of Western civilisation that have enabled it to mislead and captivate ways of thinking and living to such an extraordinary degree and with such impact on all societies.

His characterisation of the Qurʾān

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan opens *al-Madkhal ʾilā al-Dirāsāt al-Qurʾāniyyah* with a discussion titled, *The Qurʾān Talks About Itself*. In it, he mentions that the greatest evidence of the Qurʾān's being a miracle is the absolute authoritativeness of the knowledge and guidance it conveys. Man, for all his pretensions, is ignorant of his own self and his essential being. All knowledge that is derived from human reasoning or experience, though the Qurʾān calls on mankind to use those faculties that God has given him, is subject to the shortcomings and errors that flow from man's essential ignorance of himself, of the limitations of time and place, of the physical world which reason cannot penetrate or has not yet penetrated. Clear, secure understanding of what pleases or angers God can never be acquired through analogies and guesswork, assumptions and conjectures, or by the intuitions of a sound, upright heart. Human beings are subject to thousands of experiences and stages of trial and tribulation. The miseries and evils they enact or endure are consequent to their limited knowledge and excessive confidence in their faculties, especially when it emerges in the form of a rebellious self-reliance, wilfully opposed or hostile to God's will and purpose for man.

The Qurʾān is absolutely clear, certain and explicit with regard to the principles of religion, its fundamentals and essentials, and all that suffices for man to secure his success and prosperity in this world and in the hereafter. There is neither ambiguity nor obscurity in the Qurʾān in this regard, and it omits neither general principles nor concrete details that serve this purpose. Everything the Qurʾān presents for the guidance of human beings is free from the alteration, conjecture, contradiction, inconsistency, inconclusiveness and inappropriateness that trouble and vitiate mere human efforts to determine how people should be guided. Its authoritativeness is evident in its every syllable and turn of phrase; it is the Word of God made intelligible to man. It is therefore the unique criterion between truth and falsehood, good and evil,

light and darkness. It is the basis and overseer of the previous divine Books. It guides people to the ways of peace and moves them from darkness to light. It is an ever-living, permanent guidance, whose freshness never stales, whose relevance never diminishes, which addresses every period of history and every civilisation. God sent it as the truth and says of it, "We set forth for the people every parable in this Qurʾān so that they may ponder" (*Sūrat al-Zumar*, 39: 27); "We sent down to you clear verses, an illustration from those who passed away before you, and an admonition for those who fear" (*Sūrat al-Nūr*, 24: 34); "There is certainly a lesson in their stories for those who possess intelligence. This is no fable. Rather, it is in accordance with the Book which is before it, an exposition of everything, a guidance, and a mercy for those people who believe" (*Sūrah Yūsuf*, 12: 111).[71]

The miraculousness of the Qurʾān

Shaykh Nadwī emphasises in *al-Madkhal ʾilā al-Dirāsāt al-Qurʾāniyyah* that the miraculousness of the Qurʾān is not only in its inimitable linguistic and literary form. Rather, it is miraculous in its meanings and themes; in the scientific and cultural achievements it informed and fostered; in its teaching of the unseen and eternal realities; in the reforms it inspired in ethical, economic, social and political relationships; in its impact and power to motivate reform both personal and societal; and in its reports of events to come or those which have passed. If the incapacity of man is evident in his inability to produce anything comparable to its linguistic and literary excellence, what can be said about his incapacity to produce anything similar in these aspects of its miraculousness?

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was well aware of efforts to try and show how the discoveries of modern Western scientific inquiry affirm the Qurʾān and testify to it. While respecting the sincerity of those undertaking such efforts, and their usefulness in certain respects, he argued that this approach distracts from the Qurʾān's main and fundamental concern. Moreover, it betrays a submissiveness to modern science and its questionable discoveries, and to the questionable beneficence of technological applications especially if their immediate usefulness is weighed against negative side-effects and long-term consequences. Early Qurʾān commentators made a similar mistake with regard to ancient philosophy and widely circulated pseudo-historical traditions. But when we consider reflections on the Book resulting from this kind of approach as a proportion of the whole voluminous heritage of Qurʾān commentary, they are very few and quite insignificant. Reflections of this kind found no general acceptance within the mainstream of ʾIslāmic scholarship. The Qurʾān was not subjected to the kinds of use and ordeal to which the Scriptures were put in other societies, and

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which resulted in either misleading or inhibiting historical and scientific inquiry. That said, it is nevertheless a striking thing, which should amaze any objective reader, that, although the Qurʾān was revealed to an unlettered Prophet over fourteen centuries ago in a part of the Arab world detached from knowledge and high culture, it contains so much information, about the history of ancient peoples, even the minutiae of sectarian differences between them, about natural phenomena, the earth and seas, about celestial bodies, about the development of the human body, about the climate, winds and rain, etc. none of which is contestable on the basis of facts discovered in recent times, facts which have radically altered the principles of human knowledge in all fields. Indeed, there is nothing in the Qurʾān which is contrary to what modern science has securely established as incontrovertible fact.[72] This cannot altogether surprise believing Muslims, for whom "the book of nature" and "the Book of God" are by the same Author.

Comparison with other Scriptures

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan undertook a comparative study of the Qurʾān and the Scriptures of the past. He says that study of the accounts of the Prophets and Messengers ﷺ in the Qurʾān and those in past Scriptures cannot lead to the conclusion that either was derived from the other, only that they may share the same sublime source. However, there is a stark difference between the styles of those Scriptures, the weight of their subject matter, its seriousness and consistency and its foundations, and what we find in the Qurʾān. The Qurʾān throughout holds the awe and majesty of the Creator's speech addressed to His creatures. It does not suffer the limitations of perspective, subject and tone that characterise Scriptures that begin and end as commemorative history of a sacred individual or a sacred tribe or a sacred place. Rather, the Qurʾān's speech and its concerns are eternal, its consistent theme is the authoritative guidance of all mankind for all time, providing believers with hope, good news and admonition.

Shaykh Nadwī then presents a detailed comparison of the story of Yūsuf ﷺ in the Qurʾān and the Old Testament and also compares the portrayal of the lives of other Prophets. He stresses that the Qurʾān presents the lives of the Prophets as chaste and pure example for their followers, appropriate to their dignity and function as the men chosen to lead their people to salvation. He rejects the accusations and wayward aspersions against their conduct and character, which not only their enemies but also the ignorant and foolish among their followers deemed acceptable.

He goes on to reflect on the wisdom of the Qurʾān in how it relates the differences that arose, after guidance came to them, within groups of adherents

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of the past religions, their quarrelling about the minutiae of credal formulations and their distortions of the Scriptures:

> One of the astonishing miracles of the Qurʾān is that it contains an accurate and expert elucidation of the ideological differences between the different sects and groups among the Jews and Christians. […] The divergences in their beliefs and the reasons for their disputes and differences as mentioned in the Qurʾān are all verified, word for word, by a wide and in-depth study of their religious legacy.
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> The more ones knowledge of religion broadens, the easier it becomes to study in great detail books which are profusely published, then the more apparent the accuracy and distinctiveness of the Qurʾānic statements become to the people. Significant facts and details come to the fore and it becomes clear that the Qurʾān did not use a single letter to refer to them unless absolutely essential to that context, and that if that single letter was not there, many meanings would be hidden from us. Moreover, the varied expressions used by the Qurʾān when mentioning them are used solely for a purpose particular to the context.
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> Similarly, when the Qurʾān emphasises or specifies something around certain people or certain events and incidents, then it is done solely because of the stand adopted by the Jews and Christians, either affirmative and excessive or defensive and reactionary, or as a refutation of their accusations, a rejection of their traditions, and a reply to their deviation and digression.[73]

Oaths in the Qurʾān

The topic of oaths in the Qurʾān is very delicate. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 1350/750 AH) devoted a whole book to it, *al-Tibyān fī ʾAqsām al-Qurʾān.* Then, in the last century, Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī (d. 1930/1348 AH) wrote *ʾImʿān fī ʾAqsām al-Qurʾān*, to which Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan wrote an introduction.[74] ʿAllāmah Farāhī explains that, in a clear oath statement, an oath is not made *by* something, the oath is meant to emphasise the statement or the resolve of the one making it. If the oath is *by* something, the purpose is to bring that thing to witness and testify to that statement; religious vows are of this kind. The sense of greatness comes into the expression from that by which the oath is taken, not from the content of the statement being sworn. At times an oath is used merely to support evidence. As for the oaths of the Qurʾān, they are used for evidence and to bring to witness that by whiçh the oaths are taken.

In his introduction Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan summarises the value of this subject and the importance of the research of ʿAllāmah Farāhī. The research was needed because "The first thing that comes to mind about oaths is that the speaker is using the oath as evidence and testimony for what he wants to prove and emphasise". Now, what need has the Creator to reinforce a statement by calling to witness *one of His creatures*? After an extensive search, Shaykh

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Nadwī says, the only book ᶜAllāmah Farāhī found on the topic was *al-Tibyān fī ʾAqsām al-Qurʾān* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah:

It seeks to present the different types of oaths and the things by which the oaths are taken, and the places where they occur in the Qurʾān. […] Among the features of this book is its comprehensiveness, inclusion of all the oaths in the Qurʾān, and providing the testimonies of past scholars including his teacher, Shaykh al-ʾIslām al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Taymiyyah. At times the author explains at length the sūrah in which these oaths are mentioned and points out the bond which links one verse with the next. Together with all this, he brings in explanatory and historical subtleties. At times he quotes lines of poetry to prove a point. The author's specialisation in the field of *ḥadīth*, his knowledge of its sources, their *sanad*, and the science of narrators are all clearly discernible in the book. These are some of the qualities expected of an author like Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. Similarly, he has knowledge of the sciences that help in understanding the verses and proving the miraculous nature of the Qurʾān, sciences such as medicine, astronomy and psychology.

However, there was an urgent need to tackle this subject anew in the light of Qurʾānic studies to which there is no end and no limit and in the light of deep and comprehensive studies of the Arabic language and the styles of speech of the early Arabs, as well as in the light of comparative studies of divine scriptures and ancient religions, ᶜAllāmah Farāhī was, as our teacher ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī used to say, "The confluence of two oceans between which was a barrier preventing each from trespassing onto the other. He was a scholar proficient in Arabic and religious sciences, an erudite scholar in contemporary sciences and English […] He passed away while being totally devoted to picking up what the *ᶜulamāʾ* had missed, bringing together what they had spread, gathering what they had scattered, and establishing what they had not."

After a critique of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's reading of the oaths in the Qurʾān and his approach to the matter, and after the approval of the approach of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, ᶜAllāmah Farāhī argues that the difficulties with the matter arise from the "assumption that an oath definitely entails paying tribute to the thing by which the oath is taken. This is a baseless assumption which hinders understanding the oaths of the Qurʾān, and is the cause of all misgivings." He briefly states thereafter, "The Qurʾānic oaths in the name of different creatures are nothing but signs referring to something and a category of oath completely different from the oaths taken to indicate greatness." The Shaykh then tells us that ᶜAllāmah Farāhī "investigates the history of oaths, people's need for them in the past and present, and the various ways of taking oaths. He explains the meanings of the words of the oath, their essential import, and their three subsidiary meanings of showing honour, sanctity and mere evidence."

His chapter on the history of oaths, Shaykh Nadwī says, demonstrates:

His wide knowledge of the different styles of Arab speech, the styles of other nations, literatures and languages, cultures and religions. He cites certain errors in some translations of ancient scriptures. Showing his profound comparative study of

divine Scriptures and different religions, his wide knowledge of the speech of early Arabs, and quotation of their poetry. He concludes from all this that an oath is solely for emphasis and does not need the consideration of "the thing by which the oath is taken" at every place. If "the thing by which the oath is taken" is attached to the oath, it is merely to provide testimony and proof. It is not meant as a mark of respect unless it is in the name of God and His signs.

He mentions different types of oath: an oath taken in order to show respect to the thing by which the oath is taken, to the speaker and addressee; an oath taken to show the sanctity of the thing by which the oath is taken, he quotes many lines from poetry of the pre-ʾIslāmic poets, therein demonstrating his wide knowledge of pre-ʾIslāmic poetry; and an oath taken as evidence for the thing by which the oath is taken. This type is closest to the Qurʾānic oaths, and furthest away from misgivings and reservations. He quotes the poetry of early Arabs for this and also presents examples from the speech of early Greek linguists.

He then explains the inferences of an evidential oath and adduces proofs from the Qurʾān itself showing the evidential oaths it contains. This is the purpose behind writing this book and the themes around which it revolves. The author provides extensive examples from the Qurʾān and applies them to the objectives. He goes on to mention some of the reasons behind the non-discovery of the correct reason in explaining the oaths of the Qurʾān. He then mentions some of the aspects of rhetoric and subtleties which are found in oaths.[75]

Ḥadīth

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's brother, Dr ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī al-Ḥasanī, "paid particular attention to and put a high value on *ḥadīth*", believing that whoever lived "aloof from *ḥadīth* lived a life of excesses and shortcomings, and erred in understanding ʾIslām."[76] His father was assiduous in the pursuit of *ḥadīth* and acquired very high *ʾasānīd*. Shaykh Nadwī thus inherited his attachment to *ḥadīth* from his father and brother.

Shaykh Nadwī studied *ḥadīth* under ᶜAllāmah Muḥaddith Ḥaydar Ḥasan Khān al-Ṭonkī, who narrated from ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Nadhīr Ḥusayn Muḥaddith Dihlawī and ᶜAllāmah Ḥusayn ibn Muḥsin al-ʾAnṣārī. He attended the latter's lessons on the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, *Sunan ʾAbī Dāwūd* and *Jāmiᶜ al-Tirmidhī*, and was greatly attached to him. He also attended the *ḥadīth* lessons of the great scholar and *mujāhid*, Shaykh Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad Madanī who narrates from ᶜAllāmah Shaykh al-Hind Maḥmūd Ḥasan Deobandī, ᶜAllāmah Khalīl ʾAḥmad Sahāranpūrī the author of *Badhal al-Majhūd*, ᶜAllāmah ᶜAbd al-ᶜAlī Mīrutī, ʾAḥmad al-Barzanjī the muftī of the Shāfiᶜiyyah in Madīnah, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Jalīl Barrādah Madanī, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān who was

[75] *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp. 9-12.
[76] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, p. 89.

well-known by the name Ḥasab ʾAllāh al-Ḍarīr al-Shāfiʿī, and Shaykh ʿUthmān ʿAbd al-Salām Dāghistānī the muftī of the ʾAḥnāf in Madīnah.[77]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan also received permission to narrate *ḥadīth* from ʿAllāmah Muḥaddith ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Mubārakpūrī the author of *Tuḥfat al-ʾAḥwidhī*, who narrates from ʿAllāmah Sayyid Nadhīr Ḥusayn Muḥaddith Dihlawī, ʿAllāmah Ḥusayn ibn Muḥsin al-ʾAnṣārī, and Qāḍī Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Majhalī Shahrī. Indeed, at the time when ʿAllāmah Mubārakpūrī passed away, there was no one else narrating directly from him except ʿAllāmah Shahrī.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was devoted to studying, understanding and teaching *ʾaḥadīth* and tracing their narrations. His different writings contain *ḥadīth* notes and show his strong awareness of the role the Sunnah plays in safeguarding Muslims from innovations and fabricated customs. His following writings are directly linked to the subject of *ḥadīth*: *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*; *Dawr al-Ḥadīth fī Takwīn al-Manākh al-ʾIslāmī wa Siyānatih*,[78] a lecture delivered to the Muslim World League during its cultural season in 1989/1410 AH, before a large gathering of *ʿulamāʾ*, leaders and educators, who had come for the *ḥajj*, and local residents; and *al-ʾImām Muḥammad ibn ʾIsmāʿīl al-Bukhārī wa Kitābuh Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, a lecture delivered in Samarqand at the ʾImām al-Bukhārī Conference organised by the Oxford Centre for ʾIslāmic Studies on 23rd-24th October 1993 (7th-8th Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1414 AH).

He wrote introductions to several books of *ḥadīth*, for example: *al-ʾAbwāb wa al-Tarājim li al-Bukhārī* by ʿAllāmah Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhalawī; *Takmilah Fatḥ al-Mulhim* by ʿAllāmah Muḥammad Taqī ʿUthmānī; *al-Kawkab al-Durrī ʿalā Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* by Muḥaddith Rashīd ʾAḥmad Gangohi; *Badhal al-Majhūd ʿalā Sunan ʾAbī Dāwūd* by ʿAllāmah Muḥaddith Khalīl ʾAḥmad Sahāranpūrī; *ʾAwjaz al-Masālik ʾilā Muwaṭṭā al-ʾImām Mālik*; *Lāmiʿ al-Darārī ʿalā Jāmiʿ al-Bukhārī* by Shaykh Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhalawī; *Tahdhīb al-ʾAkhlāq* by ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Ḥayy ibn Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī; *Rawāʾiʿ al-ʾAʿlāq* written by Mawlānā ʾAbū Saḥbān Nadwī;

[77] The *sanad* of Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad al-Madanī is very high, especially from ʾAḥmad al-Barzanjī, by which the students of Shaykh al-ʾIslām al-Madanī attained a distinguished rank in *ḥadīth*.

[78] When the Shaykh sent this book to the great *ḥadīth* scholar, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʾAbū Ghuddah, the latter replied, "I remembered what the great *ḥadīth* scholar ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar said about his teacher, the *ʾImām*, the *Tābiʿī*, the shaykh of Madīnah, Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-ʾAnṣārī: 'Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd used to narrate *ḥadīth* to us and it seemed as though he was scattering pearls onto us.' You were and still are, all praise is due to God, an excellent example reminding us of those past scholars whom God blessed with His love in their hearts and love of the people for them because of their love for God and His Messenger ﷺ." ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAʿlām*, p. 75.

Nafaḥāt al-Hind wa al-Yaman bi ʾAsānīd al-Shaykh Abi al-Ḥasan by Moḥammad ʾAkram Nadwī; and *Bustān al-Muḥaddithīn* written by Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Muḥaddith Dihlawī, annotated by Moḥammad ʾAkram Nadwī.

Some of Shaykh Nadwī's reflections on *ḥadīth*, drawn from his various writings are presented below, to indicate his proficiency in the field and the importance he attached to it.

The need and concern for the Sunnah

Shaykh Nadwī speaks in several of his books about the mystery and divine wisdom behind the coming into existence and the continuance of the science of *ḥadīth*, and the ʾIslāmic community's special concern for it. He highlighted the efforts of the *ʿulamāʾ* in the study of *ḥadīth*, its compilation, and their vying with one another in checking and perfecting it to a degree that has no parallel in the history of the science and culture of any community. He argued that the *ḥadīth* disciplines replace in the ʾIslāmic community the functions which pictures, stories and legends, served in other religious communities.

The ancient nations and religions were in the habit of drawing images of their Prophets and carving statues and idols of them. They did this to display these images to succeeding generations and to keep their memories alive. It was from here that polytheism and idol-worship started. This caused numerous miseries which the communities and religions are still trying to combat. God has been most affectionate to this ʾIslāmic community and humanity in general by prohibiting the making of images or statues of the Prophets and great people. He replaced this with the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ, which is a collection of speaking images through which a person recognises his Prophet and enjoys the fortune of his companionship. It is as though he attended his assembly, listened to his talk, spent time with him, heard his speech, watched his actions and studied his life.[79]

Shaykh Nadwī explains the underlying reason for hesitation in writing down *ḥadīth* during the era of the Companions ﷺ:

The Companions ﷺ, especially ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ who was very wise and far-sighted in matters concerning the well-being of ʾIslām and the Muslims, and the future of this religion, were hesitant about the compilation of the Sunnah in both writing and publishing, notwithstanding the fact that some *ʾaḥādīth* were indeed recorded during the era of the Prophet ﷺ.[80] ʿAllāmah Dr Muṣṭafā al-Sibāʿī is correct when he says in his book, *al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrīʿ al-ʾIslāmī*, "ʿUmar ﷺ was most desirous that the Companions should not narrate *ʾaḥādīth* from the

[79] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, p. 20.

[80] On the writing down of the *ʾaḥadīth*, see Dr Muṣṭafā al-Sibāʿī, *al-Sunnah wa Makānātihā fī al-Tashrīʿ al-ʾIslāmī*, pp. 58-66.

Messenger ﷺ abundantly lest this distract the people from the Qurʾān."[81] The Qurʾān was still being revealed and it was still fresh. The Muslims were therefore in dire need of memorising, conveying, acquainting and devoting themselves to its study. Al-Shaʿbī narrates on the authority of Qurẓah ibn Kaʿb who said, "We left for Iraq and ʿUmar ﷺ walked with us till Ṣirār. He performed ablution while washing his body parts twice. He then said, 'Do you know why I walked with you?' They replied, 'Yes. We are the Companions of the Messenger of God ﷺ and so you walked with us.' He said, 'You will meet people of a village who make a buzzing sound in their recitation of the Qurʾān like the buzzing of a bee. Do not divert them with the *ḥadīth* for you will cause them to become preoccupied. Gain proficiency in the Qurʾān and restrict narrating *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of God ﷺ. You may now continue and I am with you.' When Qurẓah came to the village, its residents said: 'Narrate *ḥadīth* to us.' He replied, "ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ prohibited us from this."'"[82]

ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr ﷺ narrates that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ wanted to record the *sunan* so he consulted the Companions ﷺ of God's Messenger ﷺ. They advised him to record them. ʿUmar ﷺ began seeking the counsel of God in this regard. One morning he got up with God making the decision for him. He said, "I wanted to record the *sunan*. I thought of a nation before you who wrote many books and remained engrossed with them, while leaving aside the Book of God. By God, I will never cover the Book of God with anything."[83]

God destined the Khalīf, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz[84] to commission the legal, practical and scholarly cannons of the ʾIslāmic community on which to a great extent future generations came to rely. After becoming the Khalif he focused on the science of *ḥadīth*.

The science of *ḥadīth* was the first of the sciences to which God inspired this community to turn, to strive to protect, compile, transmit, diffuse; to exhaust itself in receiving it and gathering it, to vie in checking it and becoming proficient with it, and to pay particular attention to all the disciplines and sub-disciplines connected to it. It was a

[81] This tendency can be observed to some degree in Islam and to a much greater extent in other religions. It is related to a negative side-effect of the institutionalisation of scholarship, the specialist concern with commentaries rather than original texts, and then with commentaries on commentaries. That is why the *ʿulamāʾ* always emphasise the importance of memorising the Qurʾān and close, accurate study of the *ḥadīth* so that knowledge and understanding are first hand, and the guidance of the Qurʾān is implemented within the framework, boundaries and spirit of the Prophet ﷺ.

[82] *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm*, vol. 2, p. 120, cited in Dr Muṣṭafā al-Sibāʿī, *al-Sunnah wa Makānātihā fī al-Tashrīʿ al-ʾIslāmī*.

[83] *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm*, vol. 1, p. 76; ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 23-25.

[84] The mother of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was ʾUmm ʿĀṣim Laylā bint ʿĀṣim ibn ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

very strong and clear inspiration in which the wisdom of God and His concern for the protection and perfection of this religion becomes apparent.[85]

A quick glance at the *Shamāʾil* of ʾImām ʾAbū ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī (824-92/208-78 AH) as an example, suffices to convince one that the particular and extraordinary attention paid to recording minute details about his character and physical appearance ﷺ, his habits and acts of worship, his words and actions, and every other imaginable thing which has the slightest connection with this noble personality, explaining it sometimes concisely and sometimes in detail, has no parallel in the biographies of the Prophets nor in the histories of great men.[86] This was not a mere coincidence, the product of any personal interest nor of an individual effort. Similarly, a person who leafs through *al-ʾAdab al-Mufrad* by ʾImām ʾAbū ʿAbd ʾAllāh Muḥammad ibn ʾIsmāʿīl al-Bukhārī (810-70/194-256 AH), in which its great author compiled all that concerns ʾIslāmic good manners, noble characteristics, good family and social dealings, the rights of companionship, the training of the soul and behaviour in life, all of which is based on the authentic reports from the Messenger ﷺ and related from him, will be convinced that this was not a chance event in time. Rather, it was destined by the Almighty, the All-Knowing, so that deeds on the pattern of the Sunnah will be enacted in every era and generation. This is based on the words of God, "There is a good example for you in the Messenger of God" (*Sūrat al-ʾAḥzāb*, 33: 21). "Say, 'If you have love for God then follow my way so that God may love you" (*Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān*, 3: 31). And so that no one may offer the excuse that the narrations have perished and the accounts have expired and they therefore cannot follow and emulate the Prophet ﷺ as was the case with the past Prophets ﷺ. For some of them nothing but their name remains, or incomplete accounts which are insufficient for emulation.[87]

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Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan says of the movement to compile and classify *ḥadīth*, "Attention to the recording of *ḥadīth* had commenced during the era of the Prophet ﷺ and immediately after his death in an unsystematic and informal manner. History books and biographies of the Companions ﷺ make mention of specific collections attributed to their compilers."

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ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀṣ had a collection called *al-Ṣādiqah*,[88] ᶜAlī ibn ᵓAbī Ṭālib had a *Ṣaḥīfah*,[89] as did ᵓAnas, who used to display his book when people gathered by him.[90] Written works and compilations are also attributed to ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn ᶜAbbās,[91] ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn Masᶜūd[92] and Jābir ibn ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh.[93] The *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām ibn Munabbih (d. 719 or 720/100 AH or 101 AH), a student of ᵓAbū Hurayrah (d. 677/57 AH), who dictated it to him around the middle of the first century, showing how early this movement of accumulating and recording *ḥadīth* started.[94] It is the oldest complete collection discovered so far.[95]

The endeavour to compile and classify *ḥadīth* strengthened and gathered pace into the middle of the second century. At the forefront of this effort was: Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 742/124 AH), Ibn Jurayj al-Makkī (d. 767/149 AH), Ibn ᵓIsḥāq (d. 768/150 AH), Maᶜmar ibn Rāshid al-Yamanī (d. 770/152 AH), Saᶜīd ibn ᵓAbī ᶜArūbah Madanī (d. 773/156 AH), al-Rabīᶜ ibn Ṣabīḥ (d. 776/159 AH), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 777/160 AH), Mālik ibn ᵓAnas the compiler of the *Muwaṭṭā* (d. 795/178 AH), Layth ibn Saᶜd (d. 791/174 AH) and ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn al-Mubārak (d. 797/180 AH). Many followed these great pioneers of this science.[96]

God destined an army of students numbering thousands for this mammoth task. They distinguished themselves with their great courage, intense energy, fortitude, patience, and strong memories. An ardent desire to collect *ḥadīth* overwhelmed their hearts and minds. Their devotion to it was so intense that it came as a barrier between them and other desires. They travelled to distant horizons and spread out to different lands in search of different narrations and authentic *ᵓasānīd*. They possessed a passionate love and burning thirst in this regard that is unknown in the history of any other nation.[97]

The science of *ḥadīth* enjoys the greatest share of scholarly services, research and investigations, painstaking scholarly efforts to protect and

[88] *Jāmiᶜ Bayān al-ᶜIlm*, vol. 1, p. 73.
[89] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ᶜIlm*, b. *Kitābat al-ᶜIlm*.
[90] *Taqyīd al-ᶜIlm*, p. 5.
[91] al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ᶜIlal*.
[92] *Jāmiᶜ Bayān al-ᶜIlm*, vol. 1, p. 72.
[93] Ibn Saᶜd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), vol. 5, p. 467.
[94] See *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām ibn Munabbih* by Dr Muḥammad Ḥamīdullāh, (Hyderabad, 1955; in Urdu), for a list of the collections written during the Prophet's lifetime.
[95] This collection was found in al-Maktabah al-Ẓāhiriyyah in Damascus, in the Berlin library, and in Ankara University in Turkey. It was published in four issues of *al-Majmaᶜ al-ᶜIlmī al-ᶜArabī* (Damascus, 1953) and also separately in a single volume.
[96] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ᵓilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 28-30.
[97] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Imām Muḥammad ibn ᵓIsmāᶜīl al-Bukhārī wa Kitābuh al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Raebareli: Dār ᶜArafāt, n.d.), p. 9.

safeguard it, encompass it and spread it through extensive and continuous travelling for its sake. The ᵓIslāmic community has the fortunate and unique position among all other nations in receiving the *ḥadīth* corpus totally protected, secure, sifted, studied and serviced. This commences with the blessed collections of the Companions like *al-Ṣādiqah* of ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀṣ to the *Muwaṭṭā* of Mālik. This effort extends to *al-Kitāb al-ᵓĀthār* of ᵓImām Muḥammad and ᵓImām ᵓAbū Yūsuf to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of ᵓImām al-Bukhārī and ᵓImām Muslim, to the *Sunan* of ᵓImām al-Dāraquṭnī and ᵓImām al-Bayhaqī, and the later collections. These were all sincere and mighty academic endeavours in which the *ḥadīth* scholars exhausted their entire lives and joined their nights to their days. These services continued, increased and complemented each other until this science was fully matured.[98]

The collections of *ḥadīth* and *sunan*

Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan says of the Sunnah collections, "In this way, *ḥadīth* became a subject of attention for the *ᵓUmmah* after the Qurᵓān. The dedication of sincere workers was directed to its compilation and codification, they continued paying attention to it and sacrificing themselves for it until there came forth from this mighty collection, which was spread out far and wide, authentic and revised collections of *ḥadīth*."[99]

In his book, *al-Madkhal ᵓilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, Shaykh Nadwī has a section entitled, *A brief introduction to the authors of the six authentic collections, aspects from their biographies and their salient features*. In it he provides a concise biography of ᵓImām al-Bukhārī, his status in the field of *ḥadīth*, the distinction of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and the best known commentaries on it. He refers to divisions of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* into books and chapters, and the subtleties and fine points within its chapter headings. Similarly he provides biographies, of ᵓImām Muslim, ᵓImām ᵓAbū Dāwūd, ᵓImām al-Tirmidhī, ᵓImām al-Nasāᵓī, ᵓImām Ibn Mājah and ᵓImām Mālik ibn ᵓAnas. He goes on to mention other collections like *al-ᵓĀthār* of ᵓImām ᵓAbū Ḥanīfah, the *Musnad* of ᵓImām ᵓAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, the *Musnad* of ᵓAbū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī, *Sharḥ Maᶜānī al-ᵓĀthār* of ᵓImām al-Ṭaḥāwī, the three *Maᶜājim* of al-Ṭabarānī, the *Sunan* of al-Dāraquṭnī, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān al-Bastī, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Khuzaymah, *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* of al-Baghawī and *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* of al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī.

[98] Shāh ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz Dihlawī (d. 1822/1239 AH), *Bustān al-Muḥaddithīn* (transl. into Arabic and ed. Moḥammad ᵓAkram Nadwī; Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-ᵓIslāmī, 2008), Foreword, p. 5.
[99] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ᵓilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, p. 31.

On the chapters and headings (*tarājim*) of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan comments:

> There is a popular saying among the *ʿulamāʾ* that the *fiqh* of al-Bukhārī is in his headings. This has become a salient feature of this book by which it distinguishes itself from other *ṣaḥīḥ* collections, demonstrating its awesome value and excellent status. It has also become a criterion by which to gauge the intelligence of the *ʿulamāʾ*, their sharpness and fluency of thought, depth of reflection, their ability to understand this great book […] and fathom the intent of the compiler. […] We do not know of any litterateur or linguist seeking to understand a line of poetry, identify a poetic meaning and reach the intent of its author like the in-depth study undertaken by the commentators and teachers of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in order to understand the intent of the compiler and to explain his words. […] This is due to the sincerity of its author for the science of *ḥadīth*, his total devotion to it, his endeavours in its path, and his sacrificing himself for it.
>
> The secret behind the ambiguity of these chapters and headings, the multifarious objectives of the author […] is like that of a tireless bee striving to draw the last drop of pollen from the flower and then converting it to pure honey as a cure for the people.[100]

The various sciences of *ḥadīth* criticism

The categorisation of a *ḥadīth* as *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan* and *ḍaʿīf* (authentic, sound and weak) "entails listing the pre-conditions to be found in both narrator and narration, the deficiencies, weaknesses and rarities which occur in a narration, the basis on which a narration is rejected, and the qualities required to strengthen a narration. It also entails the manner of hearing a *ḥadīth*, conveying it, checking it, and the manners which a *ḥadīth* scholar must follow, among various other elements. These originally scattered subjects and regulations were in the hearts of the *ʿulamāʾ* of the first three centuries, and were then gathered and set out systematically in books, as was the case with other ʾIslāmic sciences in the course of their progress and development."[101]

The *ḥadīth* scholars closely studied the narrators who conveyed the Prophetic tradition to them, examined their identities, their names, their fathers' names, events in their lives, their character, and the position as regards their trustworthiness, honesty and strength of memory. In this way, those who were connected to the life and times of the Prophet ﷺ became the object of study, research and repeated mention down the ages and the record of their names and lives has been preserved. The science of *ḥadīth* narration (*ʾAsmāʾ al-Rijāl*) was one of the highest achievements of the ʾIslāmic community, not shared by any other. Dr Springer says in his English introduction to *al-ʾIṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah* by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʾAsqalānī, "The glory of the literature of the

[100] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43.
[101] *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

Muslims is its literary bibliography. There is no nation, nor has there been any like them who recorded in the course of twelve centuries the life of every man of letters. If collected, the bibliographical records of the Muslims would probably have accounts of the lives of half a milion distinguished personalities, and it would be found that there is not a decennium of their history, nor a place of importance, which is without representatives."[102]

The *ḥadīth* scholars did not confine themselves to identifying the *ḥadīth* narrators. They gathered everything about their manners and habits, their strengths and weaknesses, their caution or lack of it, their piety knowledge and understanding and the strength of their memory when young and when old. They gathered what their contemporaries said about them without fear or favour, even if the subject was a powerful ruler or a revered Shaykh. History testifies to the integrity and honesty of these critics. They lived up to the command of the Qurʾān, "O Believers! Remain steadfast upon justice, giving testimony for the sake of God even though it be to your detriment or that of your parents or that of your relatives" (*Sūrat al-Nisāʾ*, 4: 135).[103] The information they accumulated enabled the science of *Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl*, the science of assessing the narrators:

> It is a science which investigates the conditions of the narrators, including their trustworthiness, reliability, justice and strong memory, or the opposite of all this, dishonesty, negligence and forgetfulness. This was one of the most magnificent sciences born from that blessed movement. We do not know of any similar science in any other nation. The intense desire of the *ʿulamāʾ* to know about the conditions of the narrators so that they may be able to differentiate the authenticated from the fabricated led to the birth of this science. The *ʿulamāʾ* would personally test the narrators who were contemporaries and make inquiries about those who went before them. They would then make judgments about them with neither hesitation nor restraint because this was for the defence of the religion of God and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ.[104]

Ḥadīth dictionaries

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan explains that glossing the words in *ḥadīth* texts was done by the great commentators on the *ḥadīth* collections, like ʿAllāmah al-ʿAynī in his *ʿUmdah al-Qārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Nawawī in his *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and others. However, the scholar who distinguished himself in this task, essential for the understanding of *ḥadīth* and its practical application, was ʿAllāmah Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir Patanī al-Hindī al-Gujarātī

[102] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʾAsqalānī, *al-ʾIsābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah* (Calcutta, 1853-54), vol. 1, p. 1.
[103] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 63-64.
[104] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

Messenger ﷺ abundantly lest this distract the people from the Qurʾān."[81] The Qurʾān was still being revealed and it was still fresh. The Muslims were therefore in dire need of memorising, conveying, acquainting and devoting themselves to its study. Al-Shaʿbī narrates on the authority of Qurẓah ibn Kaʿb who said, "We left for Iraq and ʿUmar ﷺ walked with us till Ṣirār. He performed ablution while washing his body parts twice. He then said, 'Do you know why I walked with you?' They replied, 'Yes. We are the Companions of the Messenger of God ﷺ and so you walked with us.' He said, 'You will meet people of a village who make a buzzing sound in their recitation of the Qurʾān like the buzzing of a bee. Do not divert them with the *ḥadīth* for you will cause them to become preoccupied. Gain proficiency in the Qurʾān and restrict narrating *ḥadīth* of the Messenger of God ﷺ. You may now continue and I am with you.' When Qurẓah came to the village, its residents said: 'Narrate *ḥadīth* to us.' He replied, "Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ prohibited us from this."'"[82]

ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr ﷺ narrates that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ wanted to record the *sunan* so he consulted the Companions ﷺ of God's Messenger ﷺ. They advised him to record them. ʿUmar ﷺ began seeking the counsel of God in this regard. One morning he got up with God making the decision for him. He said, "I wanted to record the *sunan*. I thought of a nation before you who wrote many books and remained engrossed with them, while leaving aside the Book of God. By God, I will never cover the Book of God with anything."[83]

God destined the Khalīf, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz[84] to commission the legal, practical and scholarly cannons of the ʾIslāmic community on which to a great extent future generations came to rely. After becoming the Khalīf he focused on the science of *ḥadīth*.

The science of *ḥadīth* was the first of the sciences to which God inspired this community to turn, to strive to protect, compile, transmit, diffuse; to exhaust itself in receiving it and gathering it, to vie in checking it and becoming proficient with it, and to pay particular attention to all the disciplines and sub-disciplines connected to it. It was a

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[82] *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm*, vol. 2, p. 120, cited in Dr Muṣṭafā al-Sibāʿī, *al-Sunnah wa Makānātihā fī al-Tashrīʿ al-ʾIslāmī*.

[83] *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm*, vol. 1, p. 76; ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 23-25.

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very strong and clear inspiration in which the wisdom of God and His concern for the protection and perfection of this religion becomes apparent.[85]

A quick glance at the *Shamāʾil* of ʾImām ʾAbū ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī (824-92/208-78 AH) as an example, suffices to convince one that the particular and extraordinary attention paid to recording minute details about his character and physical appearance ﷺ, his habits and acts of worship, his words and actions, and every other imaginable thing which has the slightest connection with this noble personality, explaining it sometimes concisely and sometimes in detail, has no parallel in the biographies of the Prophets nor in the histories of great men.[86] This was not a mere coincidence, the product of any personal interest nor of an individual effort. Similarly, a person who leafs through *al-ʾAdab al-Mufrad* by ʾImām ʾAbū ʿAbd ʾAllāh Muḥammad ibn ʾIsmāʿīl al-Bukhārī (810-70/194-256 AH), in which its great author compiled all that concerns ʾIslāmic good manners, noble characteristics, good family and social dealings, the rights of companionship, the training of the soul and behaviour in life, all of which is based on the authentic reports from the Messenger ﷺ and related from him, will be convinced that this was not a chance event in time. Rather, it was destined by the Almighty, the All-Knowing, so that deeds on the pattern of the Sunnah will be enacted in every era and generation. This is based on the words of God, "There is a good example for you in the Messenger of God" (*Sūrat al-ʾAḥzāb*, 33: 21). "Say, 'If you have love for God then follow my way so that God may love you" (*Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān*, 3: 31). And so that no one may offer the excuse that the narrations have perished and the accounts have expired and they therefore cannot follow and emulate the Prophet ﷺ as was the case with the past Prophets ﷺ. For some of them nothing but their name remains, or incomplete accounts which are insufficient for emulation.[87]

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ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀṣ had a collection called *al-Ṣādiqah*,[88] ᶜAlī ibn ᵓAbī Ṭālib had a *Ṣaḥīfah*,[89] as did ᵓAnas, who used to display his book when people gathered by him.[90] Written works and compilations are also attributed to ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn ᶜAbbās,[91] ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn Masᶜūd[92] and Jābir ibn ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh.[93] The *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām ibn Munabbih (d. 719 or 720/100 AH or 101 AH), a student of ᵓAbū Hurayrah (d. 677/57 AH), who dictated it to him around the middle of the first century, showing how early this movement of accumulating and recording *ḥadīth* started.[94] It is the oldest complete collection discovered so far.[95]

The endeavour to compile and classify *ḥadīth* strengthened and gathered pace into the middle of the second century. At the forefront of this effort was: Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 742/124 AH), Ibn Jurayj al-Makkī (d. 767/149 AH), Ibn ᵓIsḥāq (d. 768/150 AH), Maᶜmar ibn Rāshid al-Yamanī (d. 770/152 AH), Saᶜīd ibn ᵓAbī ᶜArūbah Madanī (d. 773/156 AH), al-Rabīᶜ ibn Ṣabīḥ (d. 776/159 AH), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 777/160 AH), Mālik ibn ᵓAnas the compiler of the *Muwaṭṭā* (d. 795/178 AH), Layth ibn Saᶜd (d. 791/174 AH) and ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn al-Mubārak (d. 797/180 AH). Many followed these great pioneers of this science.[96]

God destined an army of students numbering thousands for this mammoth task. They distinguished themselves with their great courage, intense energy, fortitude, patience, and strong memories. An ardent desire to collect *ḥadīth* overwhelmed their hearts and minds. Their devotion to it was so intense that it came as a barrier between them and other desires. They travelled to distant horizons and spread out to different lands in search of different narrations and authentic *ᵓasānīd*. They possessed a passionate love and burning thirst in this regard that is unknown in the history of any other nation.[97]

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[98] Shāh ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz Dihlawī (d. 1822/1239 AH), *Bustān al-Muḥaddithīn* (transl. into Arabic and ed. Moḥammad ᵓAkram Nadwī; Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-ᵓIslāmī, 2008), Foreword, p. 5.
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ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀṣ had a collection called *al-Ṣādiqah*,[88] ᶜAlī ibn ᵓAbī Ṭālib had a *Ṣaḥīfah*,[89] as did ᵓAnas, who used to display his book when people gathered by him.[90] Written works and compilations are also attributed to ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn ᶜAbbās,[91] ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn Masᶜūd[92] and Jābir ibn ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh.[93] The *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām ibn Munabbih (d. 719 or 720/100 AH or 101 AH), a student of ᵓAbū Hurayrah (d. 677/57 AH), who dictated it to him around the middle of the first century, showing how early this movement of accumulating and recording *ḥadīth* started.[94] It is the oldest complete collection discovered so far.[95]

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On the chapters and headings (*tarājim*) of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan comments:

> There is a popular saying among the *ʿulamāʾ* that the *fiqh* of al-Bukhārī is in his headings. This has become a salient feature of this book by which it distinguishes itself from other *ṣaḥīḥ* collections, demonstrating its awesome value and excellent status. It has also become a criterion by which to gauge the intelligence of the *ʿulamāʾ*, their sharpness and fluency of thought, depth of reflection, their ability to understand this great book […] and fathom the intent of the compiler. […] We do not know of any litterateur or linguist seeking to understand a line of poetry, identify a poetic meaning and reach the intent of its author like the in-depth study undertaken by the commentators and teachers of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in order to understand the intent of the compiler and to explain his words. […] This is due to the sincerity of its author for the science of *ḥadīth*, his total devotion to it, his endeavours in its path, and his sacrificing himself for it.
>
> The secret behind the ambiguity of these chapters and headings, the multifarious objectives of the author […] is like that of a tireless bee striving to draw the last drop of pollen from the flower and then converting it to pure honey as a cure for the people.[100]

The various sciences of *ḥadīth* criticism

The categorisation of a *ḥadīth* as *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan* and *ḍaʿīf* (authentic, sound and weak) "entails listing the pre-conditions to be found in both narrator and narration, the deficiencies, weaknesses and rarities which occur in a narration, the basis on which a narration is rejected, and the qualities required to strengthen a narration. It also entails the manner of hearing a *ḥadīth*, conveying it, checking it, and the manners which a *ḥadīth* scholar must follow, among various other elements. These originally scattered subjects and regulations were in the hearts of the *ʿulamāʾ* of the first three centuries, and were then gathered and set out systematically in books, as was the case with other ʾIslāmic sciences in the course of their progress and development."[101]

The *ḥadīth* scholars closely studied the narrators who conveyed the Prophetic tradition to them, examined their identities, their names, their fathers' names, events in their lives, their character, and the position as regards their trustworthiness, honesty and strength of memory. In this way, those who were connected to the life and times of the Prophet ﷺ became the object of study, research and repeated mention down the ages and the record of their names and lives has been preserved. The science of *ḥadīth* narration (*ʾAsmāʾ al-Rijāl*) was one of the highest achievements of the ʾIslāmic community, not shared by any other. Dr Springer says in his English introduction to *al-ʾIṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah* by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʾAsqalānī, "The glory of the literature of the

[100] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43.
[101] *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

Muslims is its literary bibliography. There is no nation, nor has there been any like them who recorded in the course of twelve centuries the life of every man of letters. If collected, the bibliographical records of the Muslims would probably have accounts of the lives of half a milion distinguished personalities, and it would be found that there is not a decennium of their history, nor a place of importance, which is without representatives."[102]

The *ḥadīth* scholars did not confine themselves to identifying the *ḥadīth* narrators. They gathered everything about their manners and habits, their strengths and weaknesses, their caution or lack of it, their piety knowledge and understanding and the strength of their memory when young and when old. They gathered what their contemporaries said about them without fear or favour, even if the subject was a powerful ruler or a revered Shaykh. History testifies to the integrity and honesty of these critics. They lived up to the command of the Qurʾān, "O Believers! Remain steadfast upon justice, giving testimony for the sake of God even though it be to your detriment or that of your parents or that of your relatives" (*Sūrat al-Nisāʾ*, 4: 135).[103] The information they accumulated enabled the science of *Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl*, the science of assessing the narrators:

> It is a science which investigates the conditions of the narrators, including their trustworthiness, reliability, justice and strong memory, or the opposite of all this, dishonesty, negligence and forgetfulness. This was one of the most magnificent sciences born from that blessed movement. We do not know of any similar science in any other nation. The intense desire of the *ʿulamāʾ* to know about the conditions of the narrators so that they may be able to differentiate the authenticated from the fabricated led to the birth of this science. The *ʿulamāʾ* would personally test the narrators who were contemporaries and make inquiries about those who went before them. They would then make judgments about them with neither hesitation nor restraint because this was for the defence of the religion of God and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ.[104]

Ḥadīth dictionaries

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan explains that glossing the words in *ḥadīth* texts was done by the great commentators on the *ḥadīth* collections, like ʿAllāmah al-ʿAynī in his *ʿUmdah al-Qārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Nawawī in his *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and others. However, the scholar who distinguished himself in this task, essential for the understanding of *ḥadīth* and its practical application, was ʿAllāmah Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir Patanī al-Hindī al-Gujarātī

[102] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʾAsqalānī, *al-ʾIsābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah* (Calcutta, 1853-54), vol. 1, p. 1.
[103] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 63-64.
[104] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

(d. 1578/985 AH). Every student of *ḥadīth* is indebted to and in need of the five volumes of his *Majmaᶜ Biḥār al-ʾAnwār fī Gharāʾib al-Tanzīl wa Laṭāʾif al-ʾAkhbār*. ᶜAllāmah Sayyid ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī (d. 1922/1340 AH), in his biography of ᶜAllāmah al-Patanī, in the fourth volume of his *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, says, "He gathered every obscure word or expression in the *ḥadīth* and whatever was written about it. This book is like a commentary on the six authentic collections of *ḥadīth*. This book has been unanimously accepted by the scholars ever since its appearance. This effort of his was a great favour to the scholars."[105]

A history of the science of *ḥadīth* in India

The following extract from Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's introduction to the book, *ʾAwjaz al-Masālik* is a brilliant synopsis of the history of *ḥadīth* and the development of its sciences in India. It also conveys his love of the *ḥadīth* sciences and his understanding of the need for them:

The science of *ḥadīth* is one of the sciences which God inspired this *ʾummah* to pay particular attention to.

Every ʾIslāmic land had a full share of this Prophetic legacy which came with the soldiers and conquerors, the *duᶜāt* and transmitters, the lecturers and teachers, and the jurists and *ḥadīth* scholars. The science of *ḥadīth* entered during the early stages of the ʾIslāmic conquest of the lands of India. Al-Rabīᶜ ibn Ṣabīḥ al-Saᶜdī was from among the *mujāhidūn* who went to India. Al-Jalabī says in his book, *Kashf al-Ẓunūn*, "He was the first person to write a book in ʾIslām." There is absolutely no doubt that he was the first author in the science of *ḥadīth*. He passed away and was buried in India in 776/159 AH.

The science of *ḥadīth* accompanied the Arabs who conquered these lands. This science was part of their flesh and blood, and so they carried it with them. *Ḥadīth* scholars accompanied them in every battle. There were those among them who settled in India and passed away there. The science of *ḥadīth* spread under the Arabs' rule. When their rule ended in Sind and the Ghaznawī and Ghawrī kings took over from them, and people from Khurāsān and Transoxiana followed, *ḥadīth* became as rare as red brimstone and in some cases ceased to exist. Poetry, astronomy and mathematics became the preoccupation of the people. And in ʾIslāmic sciences, they were occupied with *fiqh* and *ʾuṣūl*. Centuries passed in this way to the extent that Greek wisdom became the craft of the Indians, and they turned away from the sciences of the Sunnah and the Qurʾān, with the exception of some *fiqh* texts as mentioned above. Their limited vision in *ḥadīth* was confined to *Mashāriq al-ʾAnwār* of al-Ṣāghānī. If anyone progressed to *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* of al-Baghawī or *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, he felt that he had reached the level of the *muḥaddithūn*. This was solely because of their ignorance in *ḥadīth*.

This situation continued and became so aggravated that the contact of the Muslims of India with this pure source and original foundation of religion was

[105] *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

almost severed. India became aloof from the movement of writing and education which existed in the Arab lands. It lagged behind the caravan of ʾIslāmic sciences and became a separate, detached world. When Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Miṣrī visited these lands during the rule of ᶜAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Khaljī in the eighth century, he was pained and horrified by the situation. He wrote a letter to the ruler in which he took the jurists of this country to task for their inattention to *ḥadīth*. But the local scholars prevented this letter from reaching the ruler.

Divine consideration befell India and so God gifted these lands with distinguished delegations of *ḥadīth* scholars from Ḥijāz, Ḥaḍramawt, Egypt, Iraq and Iran. This was in the tenth century AH. However, the majority of them preferred to settle in Gujarat because it had an ʾIslāmic government which protected the sciences and embraced the *ᶜulamāʾ*. The rulers of Gujarat distinguished themselves in acquiring knowledge of *ḥadīth* and remained engrossed in this field. In time, these immigrant scholars passed away and were buried in Ahmedabad, the capital of Gujarat.

Inspiration then drove some *ᶜulamāʾ* of India to Makkah and Madīnah, the sources and strongholds of this science. There is a long list of such scholars, but the most famous among them are the following: Shaykh Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī al-Muttaqī the author of *Kanz al-ᶜUmmāl* (d. 1567/974 AH), and his student, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir Patanī the author of *Majmaᶜ al-Biḥār*, who died in 1578/985 AH. Both of them rendered sterling service to the science of *ḥadīth* and wrote important books on this subject. Then came the era of Shaykh ᶜAllāmah ᶜAbd al-Ḥaqq ibn Sayf al-Dīn al-Bukhārī Dihlawī (d. 1642/1051 AH). He studied *ḥadīth* under the *ᶜulamāʾ* of Ḥijāz, transferred that learning to India, and adopted the capital, Delhi, as his centre. He made an all out effort to spread the science of *ḥadīth* and serve it by way of teaching, educating, explaining and annotating. The *ᶜulamāʾ* turned their attention to the science of *ḥadīth* and the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* spread and were passed on from person to person. This *business* of *ḥadīth* made tremendous profits after it had experienced so much loss because of a scarcity of *goods* and the abstention of the *ᶜulamāʾ* from this field. His children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren succeeded him, studied *ḥadīth* and compiled books on the subject. Senior *ᶜulamāʾ* rose up in every part of India and men who were acknowledged for their virtue and expertise in the field came to the fore. Then came the era of Shaykh al-ʾIslām ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm Dihlawī, well-known as Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī (d. 1762/1175 AH). He travelled to Ḥijāz and studied *ḥadīth* under Shaykh ʾAbū Ṭāhir ibn ʾIbrāhīm al-Kurdī Madanī. He returned and dedicated all his efforts to the spread of *ḥadīth*. A *ḥadīth state* was thus established in India. A gentle breeze blew from east to west and north to south. People in quest of *ḥadīth* travelled in droves from one end of India to the other. The science of *ḥadīth* became a prerequisite for proficiency and a salient mark of the people of rectitude and correct beliefs. A scholar was not considered to be a scholar unless he became an expert in *ḥadīth*. Teaching of the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* was established in every educational circle. His students and their students spread through the length and breadth of India like a blessed tree whose branches are found in every place but its origin and source unknown. Every *sanad*, every lesson, every written work, and every movement for reform and revival is intellectually linked to this blessed tree and its towering branches. How true the following lines are:

Whosoever visits your door, his organs and limbs speak of that which you have accomplished. The eye talks of coolness (Qurrah), the palm talks of gifts (Ṣilah), the heart talks of settling (Jābir), and the ears have the honour of beauty (Ḥasan).

Shāh Walī ʾAllāh was succeeded by his noble son and righteous student, Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Walī ʾAllāh (d. 1823/1238 AH). God blessed his lessons so that leading *ʿulamāʾ* and senior *ḥadīth* scholars qualified under him. The most famous of them and the one who received the greatest inspiration to spread *ḥadīth* and train teachers was his grandson, Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIsḥāq ibn Muḥammad ʾAfḍal al-ʿUmarī (d 1846/1262 AH). He enjoyed the supervision of *ḥadīth* in the last century and was the source and reference for teaching and research. People travelled to him from the furthest of places. God destined such inspiration and acceptance for him as was not shared by any of his contemporaries in India and in most of the ʾIslāmic cities of the world. This is the bounty of God which He bestows on whomsoever He wills. All the academic schools commence with him and meet him in their understanding, exposition and elucidation of *ḥadīth*. Despite the differences among these schools and their diverse approaches, their scholarly lineage and link in *ḥadīth* meets in him. He is thus the seat and the link in India, and the highest point reached by the people of *ḥadīth* narration in the last century.[106]

The *ḥadīth* as a record of the life of the Prophet ﷺ

For Shaykh Nadwī, the importance of the science of *ḥadīth*, its centrality among other ʾIslāmic sciences and in the life of Muslims, individually and collectively, is that it is a record of how the Prophet ﷺ lived his life:

As for the Prophetic *ḥadīth*, it would be correct to call it *a* kind of *diary* - if such an expression is appropriate - or a *record covering* twenty-three years *of everyday events* which the Prophet ﷺ spent, after God honoured him with prophethood, on the surface of this earth. It shows us how the Messenger ﷺ used to live in this world, how he used to spend his day and night, we learn minute details about his characteristics, habits, inclinations, preferences, words and actions. We are unable to learn as much about personalities who passed away recently, in fact, sometimes not even about contemporary personalities. It is a collection of speaking images through which man learns about his Prophet, has the honour of his companionship and obtains blessings from his speech, as if he attended his assembly, listened to his speech and lived with him. This is the best way of emulating him, taking him far from the harms of polytheism and the worship of idols experienced by ancient nations when they made images and carved statues of of their Prophets.[107]

Shaykh Nadwī suggested that the *ʾaḥādīth* recording the Prophet's final pilgrimage are a particularly telling example of how closely and zealously the

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detail of what the Prophet said and did was observed.[108] He writes in his introduction to *Ḥajjat al-Wadāʿ wa ʿUmrāt al-Nabī* ﷺ:

It is futile and a waste of time to search for anything similar to the *ḥajj* journey of the Prophet ﷺ in the journeys of leaders and famous men. Many nations abandoned the life of their Prophets, their biographies and incidents in the different stages of their lives. They lost a major portion of all this, leaving their lives and history incomplete.

[...] This is a proof which stands in place of a thousand speeches and a thousand lessons. It is a constantly travelling school, a moving *masjid*, and a mobile barrack in which an ignorant person learns, a heedless person comes to attention, a lethargic person becomes energetic, and a weak person becomes strong. It was a single cloud which covered them wherever they stopped and moved, it was the cloud of the companionship of the Prophet ﷺ, his love, his affection, his training and his supervision.[109]

Comparison between the life of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and other Prophets ﷺ

The sheer volume and comprehensiveness of what is known about the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is not a chance anomaly, it is divine wisdom:

If man had to compare his life with the lives of the previous Prophets ﷺ, then he would find that the majority of their lives are hidden in the darkness of ignorance, disregard, and full bloody historical incidents. Yet their lives conveyed a message for a specific time period, for a generation was charged to follow in their light, and did so. Thereafter there remained no need to safeguard their biographies for they were inherited by succeeding generations.

It will suffice us to present the life of ʿĪsā ﷺ. He was the last Prophet before Muḥammad ﷺ. A nation claims allegiance to him who is steeped in knowledge and writing, its excessive love for its Prophet, and his elevation to a level of divinity and sanctity. But it is unable to present to the world the minimum number of incidents in his life and of his statements sufficient to form a framework of a complete human, life which a person could emulate, or in whose light a society could move. The prevailing belief in the Christian world before the modern era encompassed events of only the last

[108] "Read the books of *ḥadīth* describing how God's Messenger ﷺ applied perfume during the Farewell Pilgrimage at the time he was donning the *iḥrām*, his marking his sacrificial animal, cupping, pointing to its exact spot on the body, the path which he followed, and the stop-over places between Makkah and Madīnah. The narrator did not even leave out the incident when a snake appeared at night in Mina and how it escaped being killed, the names of those who sat on the same animal with the Messenger of God ﷺ on this journey, and in fact throughout his life." *al-Nabī al-Khātam*, p. 14.

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three years of ᶜĪsā's ﷺ life. The investigations of researchers and specialists in this field have now concluded that it is no more and no less than fifty days.[110]

As for the other Prophets and great men of past nations and religions, insufficient information is known about them. There are major episodes missing without which their history is incomplete, and emulation of them is not feasible. Nor is it possible now to study search and recover that information. It is surely a matter of divine management and providence that where a particular model and pattern was intended for its circumstances and time, detailed memory of it was not preserved, but the pattern embodying the guidance of ᵓIslām has been preserved in detail and was meant to endure for the benefit of all times and all places.[111]

The *ḥadīth* as an eternal madrasah

The *ᵓaḥādīth* are a balanced scale for weighing the life and condition of Muslims, and an eternal *madrasah* from which reformers and revivers qualify.

The books of Sunnah and *ḥadīth* were, and still are, one of the resources for reform, revival, and correct ᵓIslāmic thinking in the *ᵓummah*. The different reformers over the ages received correct religious knowledge and pure ᵓIslāmic thinking from it. They used the *ᵓaḥādīth* as their arguments, relied on them in their call to religion and reform, and in their fight against innovation, corruption and sedition. This source is indispensable to anyone wanting to return the Muslims to the pure religion and perfect ᵓIslām, establish a link between them and the Prophetic life and perfect example, and to everyone who is forced by need and contemporary developments to derive new rulings.[112]

Recourse to the treasure-house of *ḥadīth* enabled proficient writers in different eras and places to write books for the Muslims that provided a complete constitution for their lives to the extent that if a Muslim, no matter what his occupation and class, wanted to take a step, make a decision and act wholly in accordance with the way of the Prophet ﷺ, he could have done so. Books written on this subject are many and available in most languages of the ᵓIslāmic world. Some are very detailed, some of average length, others quite concise. The best of them, in the judgement of Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan, is *Zād al-Maᶜād fī Hady Khayr al-ᶜIbād* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah

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Role of *ḥadīth* in forming and safeguarding an ᵓIslāmic ethos

In *Dawr al-Ḥadīth fī Takwīn al-Manākh al-ᵓIslāmī wa Ṣiyānatih*, and various other books, Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan studies the components which formed the ᵓIslāmic community and society, and which gave birth to a new nation that distinguished itself above other nations. He explains that the key to the revolution in this society lay in three things: firstly, the Qurᵓān; secondly, the personality, life story and character of the Prophet ﷺ; and thirdly, his teachings, guidance, instructions and actions, collectively known as the Sunnah, of which the *ḥadīth* are a record. He explains how the Companions ﷺ lived ᵓIslām by tasting, observing and practising it. He then explains that the incidents which took place during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ and his guidance and teachings in response, created the climate and environment which prepared the Muslims to understand and accept the injunctions of the Sharīᶜah. Because we have such comprehensive and detailed information about the Prophet ﷺ, it will always be possible for the Muslims to remember and strive to reproduce that environment, which in turn will re-awaken and revive ᵓIslām. By contrast, the adherents of former religions did not preserve the details and incidents of the lives nor the manners and guidance of their Prophets; therefore, they filled the void with made-up stories and teachings which, being far from the original and true teachings, cannot have had the same spiritual vitality.

Being a reliable record of the true and original teachings of the Prophet ﷺ, the *ḥadīth* also function as a check, a supervisor, of the ᵓIslāmic community and efforts to re-awaken and renew its ᵓIslām:

> Whoever examines ᵓIslāmic history will know that, were it not for the protected Sunnah and *ḥadīth*, keeping ᵓIslāmic society in check would not have been possible. The reformers and revivers of every time and clime could not have differentiated between *sunnah* and *bidᶜah* (innovation), truth and falsehood, good and evil. The *ḥadīth* is thus an eternal and continuous madrasah from which reformers and revivers qualify. It is a compelling force, forging ahead, obliging one to bear the responsibilities of *daᶜwah* and supervision.[114]

By means of the *ḥadīth* corpus, reformers in every era are able to weigh the deeds and course of the ᵓIslāmic community and recognise deviation in the path of this community. A complete balance in morals and deeds cannot be achieved without a combination of the Qurᵓān with the *ḥadīth*. The *ḥadīth* corpus alone fills the void

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[114] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Imām Muḥammad ibn ʾIsmāʿīl al-Bukhārī wa Kitābuh al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Raebareli: Dār ʿArafāt, n.d.), p. 23.

left by the passing away of the Messenger ﷺ. This void was necessary in the divine system of God, "Muḥammad is nothing but a Messenger. Messengers before him passed away" (*Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān*, 3: 144); "Without doubt you also have to die and they will also die" (*Sūrat al-Zumar*, 39: 30). If it was not for the *ḥadīth* which represents this complete, perfect and balanced life, and if it was not for the wise Prophetic guidance, and for the injunctions that the Messenger ﷺ imposed on ʾIslāmic society, this *ʾummah* may have gone too far or fallen short and the practical example which God urged us to follow would have been lost. "There is a good example for you in the Messenger of God" (*Sūrat al-ʾAḥzāb*, 33: 21); "Say, 'If you have love for God then follow my way so that God may love you" (*Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān*, 3: 31).[115]

The pre-eminence of the Sunnah in ʾIslāmic societies endures, says Shaykh Nadwī, despite the efforts made by some to create doubts about the present relevance and even the authority of the *ḥadīth*. People are still studying and researching *ḥadīth* and bringing its sources to light, still distinguishing good and evil by it, and refuting innovations arising from blind emulation of the West which would lead to religious and cultural apostasy. People are still turning away from the negative aspects and complications of Western civilisation:

> By virtue of firmly establishing the Sunnah and returning to the *ḥadīth* on the basis of the Prophetic statement, "A group from my community will continue expressing the truth until the Final Hour."
>
> Those who doubt the authority of *Ḥadīth* and those who bear the flag of rejecting the *Ḥadīth* and pure Sunnah are, as stated by a past Arab poet:
>
> Like a mountain goat that butts a rock with its horns to weaken the rock;
> the goat does not harm the rock but weakens its horns.[116]

In *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan touches on the need to safeguard the *ḥadīth* and Sunnah against those who conspire to create doubts about the authority of the *ḥadīth* in the vain hope of separating the Prophet's community from the Prophet's Sunnah. He categorically states, with the conviction of a believer full of confidence in God's help, that this conspiracy will meet humiliating failure and that, by the will of God, it will never gain access to the solid fort of the Sunnah, nor will the ʾIslāmic community ever lose its bond with the *ḥadīth* of its Prophet ﷺ.[117]

I have set out in the book, *Nafaḥāt al-Hind wa al-Yaman bi ʾAsānīd al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan*, a comprehensive list of the high *ʾasānīd* which distinguish the study and further transmission of *ḥadīth* by Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. Interested readers may refer to that book for Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's *ʾasānīd* for the *Ṣiḥaḥ Sittah* and ʾImām Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, and also for

[115] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 21-22.
[116] *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.
[117] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

his connections with other important *ʾasānīd* books of *ḥadīth* and ʾIslāmic sciences.

Guidance for students of *ḥadīth*

The last part of the Shaykh's *Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth* offers readers the wisdom of his lifetime's experience of studying and teaching *ḥadīth*:

> Special attention must be given to deriving benefit from the *ḥadīth* books and Sunnah collections in this regard apart from teaching it, writing on it and researching it, a perfect example for people in his character, dealings, behaviour and manners must be shown. The teacher must be an affirmation and manifestation of the effect of the knowledge of *ḥadīth*; his own life and behaviour and his own dealings and his outward expressions must be immersed in the Sunnah and life of the Prophet ﷺ. If he possesses all these qualities, he will encourage people to ponder the reasons for his distinction and merit and offer encouragement to study ʾIslām and the biography of the Prophet ﷺ. That will be the best *daʿwah* and the strongest of appeals without any formal calling and *daʿwah*.[118]

Students will be helped in striving for this objective if they have recourse to the sound books devoted to the subject. Of these, Shaykh Nadwī particularly recommended: al-Bukhārī's *al-ʾAdab al-Mufrad*, *al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb* by al-Mundhirī (1185-1258/580-655 AH) and *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn min Kalām Sayyid al-Mursalīn* by ʾImām al-Nawawī (1233-1277/630-675 AH), and ʾImām al-Nawawī's commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

Jurisprudence

Jurisprudence in India was afflicted by inflexibility and narrow-mindedness for many centuries. The *ʿulamā,ʾ* for the most part, confined themselves to writing commentaries, annotations and summaries of the inherited books of jurisprudence. This lasted until ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī called for inquiry and *ʾijtihād*, but very few heeded his call. ʾImām Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī's way of thinking was not practically implemented until Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ began investigating juridical issues and distancing itself from *taqlīd*. Nadwah's lead encouraged others, until investigation and *ʾijtihād* in juridical issues became commonplace in India up to the present era.

The methodology of the *ʿulamāʾ* of Nadwah in juridical studies and teaching of the Sharīʿah was characterised by combining jurisprudence with *ḥadīth*. They would first teach juridical issues concisely using the books written on the subject so that the general injunctions were learnt. They would

[118] *Ibid.*, p. 83, where Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan states, "To this list, with apology and humility, should be added the book *Tahdhīb al-ʾAkhlāq* by the father of this booklet, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī."

then teach in detail the authentic *ḥadīth* collections, especially the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* and the *Muwaṭṭā* of ʾImām Mālik, while explaining how scholars in the past derived rulings from these *ʾaḥādīth*. Their teaching of *ḥadīth* was based on including all the *ʾaḥādīth* in these collections in order that their jurisprudence be informed and supported by the statements of the Messenger ﷺ and his noble *Sunnah* in matters related to the injunctions of the *Sharīᶜah*. Their knowledge of the *Sharīᶜah* was thus also a knowledge of the underlying *ḥadīth*, not just of injunctions already formulated and handed down. Since they followed the *Fiqh* of ʾImām ʾAbū Ḥanīfah, they paid particular attention to extensive research into his derivations, while recognising the sometimes different derivations of the other *madhāhib*. If, on a particular issue, the Ḥanafī ruling or its reasoning and proofs were problematic, they would refer to the rulings of the other recognised schools.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan studied *fiqh* in this way under senior jurists until he was proficient in its *ʾuṣūl*, in the history of the rise and development of the *madhāhib* and their differences, and in the details of Ḥanafī *fiqh*. However, he did not adopt jurisprudence as the main focus of his study and writing; that remained *daᶜwah* and teaching those who came to him. Success in *daᶜwah* is indeed difficult if the *dāᶜī* is engrossed in the minutiae of *fiqh* and the controversies they can give rise to. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī observed how Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan prioritised *daᶜwah* and contrasted his work with that of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī in Egypt:

> I find a distinction between him and Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī. He was from among the prominent *duᶜāt*, and *daᶜwah* was his flesh and blood. However, he entered jurisprudence through the door of *daᶜwah*. He raised juridical issues and earned the wrath of many who did not agree with him. And how many they were! We see this in his views on many issues
>
> […] These juridical views caused Shaykh al-Ghazzālī to enter into battles against his opponents, as was the case after he wrote the book, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah Bayn ʾAhl al-Fiqh wa ʾAhl al-Ḥadīth*.
>
> As for Shaykh Nadwī, and God knows best, he does not want to enter into any of these battles at all. Instead, he wants firstly to join the hearts on true *ʾīmān*, sincere worship, upright character, and excellent dealings with God and fellow humans.
>
> His line of thinking in this regard is very close to that of Shaykh Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ, who was extremely desirous of bringing people together without separating, and building without demolishing.[119]

Shaykh Nadwī was indeed most ardent in seeking to unite people. He did not intervene in many juridical matters, albeit he occasionally issued legal verdicts to his friends. He remained committed to the *Madhhab* of ʾAbū Ḥanīfah throughout his life, never leaving his opinion unless he saw a clear proof against it. For example, he would combine the *ẓuhr* and *ᶜaṣr, maghrib*

[119] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜAraftuh*, pp. 172-73.

and *ᶜishā ṣalawāt* when travelling, by bringing one forward or delaying the other. However, he never asked any to follow him in this departure from the opinion of ʾAbū Ḥanīfah; rather, if there were other *ᶜulamāʾ* with him, he habitually gave preference to their preferred practice.

His thoughts on the important duty of *ʾijtihād*, and comparative *fiqh*, on deliverance of a code of laws that would answer contemporary needs, and on unwavering respect for all the great *ʾAʾimmah* of *Fiqh* are wholly consistent with his commitment to uniting people, to building and not demolishing, to moderation and tolerance, and are not consistent with narrow inflexibility on matters where different preferences are permissible.

ʾIjtihād and *Mujtahidīn* in the second and third centuries AH

On the history of *ʾijtihād*, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan writes:

> ʾIslām moved out from the Arabian peninsula, where life was simple and civilisation limited, to vast prosperous lands with old civilisations and distant horizons, places like Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Iran. These places had an extensive social life and a proper system of trade, administration, agriculture, irrigation, taxation and income. The task of applying ʾIslāmic principles to these matters and basing urban life on the spirit and foundations of ʾIslām required unsurpassed intelligence, intricate understanding, and extensive awareness of the contemporary society in which the Muslims were living. There was also a need for sufficient acquaintance with psychology and human nature, and a broad grasp of the different levels of the ʾIslāmic community and perspectives of life in general. In addition to this, it needed extensive knowledge of the juridical and religious treasure in the Qurʾān and Sunnah, acquaintance with the earliest sources of knowledge, and the fundamental principles of the ʾIslāmic legal system; accompanied with proficiency in the Arabic language in which the Qurʾān was revealed and which the Prophet ﷺ spoke.

He goes on to mention the extraordinary favour of God to this community in raising men of the calibre needed to accomplish this huge intellectual task. Of the *ʾAʾimmah* who initiated the four surviving schools of Sunnī *fiqh*, he writes:

> They dedicated themselves to this service for which the ʾIslāmic community and the world are indebted. […] Each of them produced an academic treasure and left behind a juridical legacy. […] God favoured them with notable students who bore this weight, increased this treasure and continued refining it, so that it could be conducive to the eras which followed after them and in lands different from their own."[120]

[120] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾIjtihād wa Nashāʾat al-Madhāhib al-Fiqhiyyah* (Lucknow: Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, n.d.), pp. 9-11.

The benefit of *ʾijtihād* in the life of the *ʾUmmah*

Without the exertion of conscience and reason that is *ʾijtihād*, and without the *mujtahidīn* intellectually and spiritually qualified for that duty, the ʾIslāmic society and civilisation would have lacked cohesion and unity:

> The presence of these *Mujtahid ʾAʾimmah* and juridical legislators in the early centuries of ʾIslām was a clear proof of the continued existence and spread of ʾIslām. It was through their efforts and eminence that the practical unity of the ʾIslāmic community was realised in its gatherings, transactions, politics and economics; in its worship and family system, and in its personal law. As a result of their efforts the ʾIslāmic community was saved from social and legal rebellion which other peoples and religions experienced during their nascent years and which gradually led to a life without religion, treading the road of atheism, or adopting a foreign judicial system which worked against the spirit of its religion and fundamentals, compelling it to cling to secularism in order to survive.
>
> […] Had the early scholars in the first centuries displayed any lethargy with regard to *ʾijtihād*, preferred indolence to working and striving, or weakened their efforts and stagnated, the ʾIslāmic state, under the pressure of the needs and demands of practical life, would have been forced to adopt Roman and Persian systems and impose Roman and Persian laws on the ʾIslāmic society. Consequently administration cannot be stopped while waiting for legislation.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan goes on to explain at length that the same need arises with respect to business activities and, most importantly, the obligatory rites of worship, *ṣalāh*, *ṣiyām*, *zakāh* and *ḥajj*. The development of the Sharīᶜah is thus an integral and fundamental characteristic of ʾIslāmic society. Had it not developed the laws that enabled Muslims to worship, to do business, to conduct and manage all the diverse activities of society and state, in accordance with the general guidance and particular injunctions of the Qurʾān and Sunnah, then "succeeding generations would have been compelled to live a life which had very little do to with ʾIslām":

> There had to be injunctions, minute details, and a juridical heritage which was both easy and accessible. There had to be *ᶜUlamāʾ* who were fully conversant with the sciences of the Sharīᶜah and qualified to instruct and guide. In this way, the ʾIslāmic society was saved from becoming a museum in its acts of worship, a museum which had all varieties of worship, and all colours of actions and movements, as is the case with the places of worship of many religions, and their monthly or annual religious functions. The participants in these functions are not linked by unity of action therein despite being the adherents of the same religion, nor does tranquillity envelop them or any divine colour, as opposed to the masājid of the Muslims, the centres of *ḥajj*, and the rites which are threaded on a single thread of unity, cohesion, likeness and solidarity. The unity of belief and worship, and submission to a single Sharīᶜah are manifest in this. The merit for all this goes to the originality and oneness of ʾIslām's teachings, and then to the efforts of the *Ḥadīth*

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> *ʾIjtihād*, formalisation of *fiqh* and derivation of Sharᶜī injunctions […] is exactly that which is demanded by the norms of the world, and is demanded for all times and climes bythe nature of this universal religion. It was thus a natural and definitive thing. As was the case with the rise of the sciences of etymology, grammar, rules of the Arabic language, and sciences related to rhetoric and expression; all these were based on the speech of the early Arabs, reciting the Qurʾān in clear Arabic and Arab poetry. In fact, the formalisation of *fiqh* was more essential than the formalisation of Arabic sciences because *fiqh* embraced Arabs, non-Arabs, and every person who reached the age of maturity in ʾIslām; it was indeed most essential because it encompassed the entire life of a Muslim, it held a strong connection to their belief and worship, having an effect on their life in the hereafter, whether they would recieve reward or punishment, fortune or misfortune, salvation or destruction.[121]

Comparative jurisprudence

The different results of *ʾijtihād*, different rulings on the basis of different arguments from more or less the same stock of source texts and applying more or less the same principles of reasoning, necessitated comparison. Comparison between the different rulings, generally in relation to the Qurʾān and Sunnah and specifically in relation to particular *ʾaḥādīth* established as relatively sound or weak, made it possible to give precedence to one juridical school over another, and one *ʾijtihād* over another:

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[121] *Ibid*., pp. 11-16.

[122] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 64-65. Shaykh Nadwī writes, "An example of research and comparison on this subject is the *Fatāwā* of Shaykh al-ʾIslām al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Taymiyyah, which ought to be named *Mawsūᶜah* instead of *Fatāwā Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ibn Taymiyyah*. This book does not require the reader to follow all it contains vis-à-vis the juridical schools, the preferences and the affirmations. The best book and source for a study of comparative jurisprudence is the book *Nayl al-ʾAwṭār Sharḥ Muntaqā al-ʾAkhbār* of ᶜAllāmah Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlī al-Shawkānī (d. 1840/1255 AH) printed in eight volumes. The most important feature of this book is the derivation of juridical injunctions from the *ḥadīth*, the manner of its reference to these injunctions, the statements of the scholars of the

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The need for *ʾijtihād* in the present era

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan recognised the need for *ʾijtihād* in contemporary times that have witnessed much change in manufacturing and trade practices and in the content and forms of contracts, etc. He writes:

> *ʾIjtihād* in matters of the Sharīᶜah and contemporary developments is a clear fact and non-contentious issue. It is the duty of specialists in the sciences of Sharīᶜah to fulfil their role as guides and leaders in this field and to use this valuable treasure, known as *ʾUṣūl al-Fiqh*, which has no parallel in the scholarly treasures of other nations for the purpose of deriving injunctions and extracting rulings. For quite some time this treasure has merely been historical. It provided nothing more and nothing less than the methods of the early *mujtahidīn* in deriving rulings. It is a known fact that the present moment cannot be stopped, paused or turned back to the past. At present, ʾIslām is a religion of peoples and societies who must face these issues head on.[123]

However, he cautioned against some of those calling for *ʾijtihād*:

> Whether they are think-tanks, men in administrative and political positions in ʾIslāmic lands, graduates of foreign universities in the West, or graduates of Western universities in ʾIslāmic lands, their competence, intelligence and administrative skills have not been sufficiently proven to confront Western civilisation with courage, conviction and intelligence; to split the path between [...] its merits and demerits; to treat it like a raw material from which they can fashion a civilisation in conformity with ʾIslāmic teachings, the need of the time, and the nature of Eastern Muslims [...] to illuminate the way for people who have become targets of reckless materialism, to remove all the dirt that they had taken from the West during their dark ages when they were weak and despondent. These people calling for *ʾijtihād* did not, in their fields of speciality, fulfil the role with which they were entrusted, in formulating a free ʾIslāmic educational system, an endeavour which is similar to *ʾijtihād*, by means of the leading positions and academic authority they held. Yet, it is an ancient habit of man to absolve himself of his responsibilities and ask others to fulfil his responsibilities for him.[124]

Moreover, he understood that there had to be limits to *ʾijtihād*:

> It is clear from the statements of some of those who are proclaiming the need for *ʾijtihād*, whether they are from the modern educated class, the zealous university youth, or some historical leaders, that there should be absolute *ʾijtihād* in every matter, and that Western values and modern criteria should be universally adopted. As though time has turned back to the day when ʾIslām came into the world, the entire

juridical schools with regard to these injunctions, the opinions of the *ᶜulamāʾ* among the Companions ﷺ and *tābiᶜīn*, the proof used by each, and an explanation of the preferred injunction in that regard."

[123] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾIjtihād wa Nashāʾat al-Madhāhib al-Fiqhiyyah*, pp. 24-26.

[124] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

> society has been overturned, whatever views and conclusions the *mujtahidūn* of the past came to have lost their value and significance, and are not congruent with the nature of this era and the realities of current life. Such a way of thinking is overpowered by superficiality, recklessness, excessive capitulation to the modern media's call for progress and modernism and its depiction of time in a manner that leads the young to imagine itself re-born with no connection to the past. This view is an over-statement of the reality, and an exaggeration of the issue in an emotional more than in a rational and factual sense.[125]

At least in part as a measure to provide a check against the reckless demands just mentioned, Shaykh Nadwī was among those who called for collective *ʾijtihād*. He writes, "It would be better if the *ʾijtihād* is not individual unless there is a real need. Rather it should be carried out collectively and academically, through exchange of opinions among the specialists, and through lengthy considerations. The issues must be sifted and gleaned in the light of the Qurʾān and Sunnah, and reviewed comprehensively from the treasury of *fiqh*, so there are no schemes and conspiracies in this regard, nor subjection to any political pressure or selfish government."[126]

Shaykh Nadwī felt it was necessary to re-formulate jurisprudence in contemporary times because of the new circumstances and issues we face, unknown to the early jurists. His book *al-Fiqh al-Muyassar* was a contribution to this effort. However, as he admits in his introduction, "My other writing tasks prevented me from completing this task despite the severe need and despite its perceived importance. But this concern and thought never left me."[127] He realised that, given his many preoccupations, this task would have to be taken up by others, after him. He had always stressed the need to remain within the framework of the Qurʾān and Sunnah and to draw closely and intelligently on the legacy of *fiqh* and *ʾuṣūl al-fiqh*. In discharging the duty of *ʾijtihād*, he argued forcefully, one should "as far as possible, abstain from any harsh attacks on any of the juridical schools that have been practised since time immemorial and established on the derivation of injunctions [...] from the Qurʾān and Sunnah, notwithstanding differences in the *ʾijtihād* and criteria. [...] If one were to attack these juridical schools, one would be waging *jihād* in the wrong place and doing battle not against an enemy but against a friend."[128]

Rather than criticise the schools, one should strive to emulate their great *ʾAʾimmah*, revere their "good intention, devotion, self-discipline, piety, respect for the Qurʾān and Sunnah, their giving preference to these two

[125] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

[126] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

[127] Shafīq al-Raḥmān Nadwī, *al-Fiqh al-Muyassar* (Lucknow: Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, 6th edn., 1998), Introduction, p. 4.

[128] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 85-87.

The need for *ʾijtihād* in the present era

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan recognised the need for *ʾijtihād* in contemporary times that have witnessed much change in manufacturing and trade practices and in the content and forms of contracts, etc. He writes:

> *ʾIjtihād* in matters of the Sharīᶜah and contemporary developments is a clear fact and non-contentious issue. It is the duty of specialists in the sciences of Sharīᶜah to fulfil their role as guides and leaders in this field and to use this valuable treasure, known as *ʾUṣūl al-Fiqh*, which has no parallel in the scholarly treasures of other nations for the purpose of deriving injunctions and extracting rulings. For quite some time this treasure has merely been historical. It provided nothing more and nothing less than the methods of the early *mujtahidīn* in deriving rulings. It is a known fact that the present moment cannot be stopped, paused or turned back to the past. At present, ʾIslām is a religion of peoples and societies who must face these issues head on.[123]

However, he cautioned against some of those calling for *ʾijtihād:*

> Whether they are think-tanks, men in administrative and political positions in ʾIslāmic lands, graduates of foreign universities in the West, or graduates of Western universities in ʾIslāmic lands, their competence, intelligence and administrative skills have not been sufficiently proven to confront Western civilisation with courage, conviction and intelligence; to split the path between [...] its merits and demerits; to treat it like a raw material from which they can fashion a civilisation in conformity with ʾIslāmic teachings, the need of the time, and the nature of Eastern Muslims [...] to illuminate the way for people who have become targets of reckless materialism, to remove all the dirt that they had taken from the West during their dark ages when they were weak and despondent. These people calling for *ʾijtihād* did not, in their fields of speciality, fulfil the role with which they were entrusted, in formulating a free ʾIslāmic educational system, an endeavour which is similar to *ʾijtihād*, by means of the leading positions and academic authority they held. Yet, it is an ancient habit of man to absolve himself of his responsibilities and ask others to fulfil his responsibilities for him.[124]

Moreover, he understood that there had to be limits to *ʾijtihād*:

> It is clear from the statements of some of those who are proclaiming the need for *ʾijtihād*, whether they are from the modern educated class, the zealous university youth, or some historical leaders, that there should be absolute *ʾijtihād* in every matter, and that Western values and modern criteria should be universally adopted. As though time has turned back to the day when ʾIslām came into the world, the entire

juridical schools with regard to these injunctions, the opinions of the *ᶜulamāʾ* among the Companions ﷺ and *tābiᶜīn*, the proof used by each, and an explanation of the preferred injunction in that regard."

[123] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾIjtihād wa Nashāʾat al-Madhāhib al-Fiqhiyyah*, pp. 24-26.

[124] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

> society has been overturned, whatever views and conclusions the *mujtahidūn* of the past came to have lost their value and significance, and are not congruent with the nature of this era and the realities of current life. Such a way of thinking is overpowered by superficiality, recklessness, excessive capitulation to the modern media's call for progress and modernism and its depiction of time in a manner that leads the young to imagine itself re-born with no connection to the past. This view is an over-statement of the reality, and an exaggeration of the issue in an emotional more than in a rational and factual sense.[125]

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sources over their own preferences or reasoning", and admire and give thanks for their tireless labours to refute and correct the errors in doctrine and practice that arose in non-Arab lands and which troubled the Muslims. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan urged his students to "follow the methodology of ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī, his sons and successors, especially ʾImām Sayyid ʾAḥmad Shahīd (d. 1831/1246 AH) and his companion, ʾImām ʾIsmāᶜīl ibn ᶜAbd al-Ghanī ibn Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī, and their companions like Shaykh Wilāyah ᶜAlī Ṣādiqpūrī al-Patnawī and his companions and successors, and Shaykh Karāmah ᶜAlī Jawnpūrī, the one through whom millions of people in Bangladesh and other places were guided to correct beliefs and practising of the Sunnah."[129]

History

The historical events and incidents that Muslim writers first presented as narrative were from the life of the Prophet ﷺ. His life thus formed the axis around which historical writing developed among Muslims, it sought to clarify rather than define notions like *the good man*, *the good life*, *the good society*, not abstractly as formal concepts, but concretely embodied in the content and flow of narrative.

The writing of history was a particular preoccupation of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's scholarly family, "God willed that I grew up in an environment whose hobby was history and the writing of biographies [...] in a family which had produced historians and writers whose main preoccupation was writing biographies, *ṭabaqāt* of the poets and litterateurs, and lives of great men be they reformers, *ᶜulamāʾ*, kings and rulers." His grandfather, ᶜAllāmah Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī (d. 1908/1326 AH), at a time when encyclopaedias were unheard of in India, wrote a large, two-volume encyclopaedia in Persian of the biographies of Ṣūfiyyah, *ᶜulamāʾ* and poets. His father, Sayyid ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy

[129] *Ibid.* Although clear enough from Shaykh Nadwī's own words, it may be worthwhile to emphasise that refraining from harsh criticism of the *madhāhib* and their *ʾAʾimmah* does not mean abstaining from comparative study of the schools, investigating their arguments and testing their proofs from reliable books of *ʾaḥādīth*. This was done extensively and normally by many senior jurists of the past. What it means apart from respecting the norms of civility is avoiding zealous partisanship against the traditional schools of *fiqh* for reasons that have little do with serving Islam and the needs of Muslims in the present time, and rather an act of sectarian politics or nationalistic tendencies. Such antagonistic approaches are dangerous and harmful to Muslims and to the religion, especially in the light of the unrelenting efforts and conspiracies of the enemies of Islam to undermine Muslims' solidarity with each other and with their past. One of the best guides to an understanding and appreciation of how and why the scholars and jurists expressed their differences is *al-ʾInṣāf fī Bayān ʾAsbāb al-ʾIkhtilāf* by ʾImām Shaykh ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī.

al-Ḥasanī (d. 1922/1341 AH), wrote the incomparable *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, eight volumes of biographies of all the major figures in India from the first to the fourteenth century of ʾIslām, as well as a history of Gujarat, and a collection of biographies and critique of Urdu poets:

> I read these books at an early age because they were available to me and the incentives to read them were strong and natural. I memorised much from them and I emulated the style of the author when I began my education in language and literature, and commenced writing and composing.
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> It was for these reasons that the discipline of biography and life histories was the most beloved, pleasant and easiest of all disciplines to me.[130]

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī has observed that Shaykh Nadwī's deep knowledge and excellence in this field served his *daᶜwah* work of "awakening the ʾIslāmic community, drawing its attention to its value among other nations, and the message which it bears for the rest of the world."[131]

His approach to history

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan opened up the conventional boundaries of historical writing. Confined to the narration of political events and their agents, "writing history which revolves around the kings and their entourage, and around incidents which are related to the government, leads some zealous youth and some *duᶜāt* to harbour negative thoughts about ʾIslām and its ineffectiveness. This is a dangerous consequence which weakens confidence in ʾIslām and enfeebles the passion and will to struggle in these times."[132] He aimed for history that embraces the perspective of those who struggled for social, religious and educational reform, whose principal agents are the Prophets ﷺ, the *ᶜulamāʾ*, the reformers and revivers, who truly changed the course of history.

To write on such subject matter, it is necessary to have recourse to sources that do not have a historical title to them and are not classified as history books:

> These are the books of literature, the books of religion, the books in which some great people recorded their acknowledgements, the events which took place in their lives and their life-experiences, the books in which some students recorded the statements or admonitions of their teachers and mentors, or conversations which took place in their assemblies, collections of letters and speeches which portray the spirit and thinking of those who wrote and uttered them, or the books which were written

[130] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf*, pp. 85-87. Additonally see; *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 6-9.
[131] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜArafṭuh*, p. 170.
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on the subject of supervising the ʾIslāmic community, criticising society, and rejecting innovations and evils.[133]

Implementing this approach to the writing of history

Sayyid Quṭb drew attention to Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's approach to writing history in his foreword to *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn?*

The distinguishing feature throughout this book is a deep understanding of the general spirit of ʾIslām in its all-embracing circle. It is therefore not to be considered an example of a religious and social study alone. Rather, it is also an example of history as it ought to be written from an ʾIslāmic perspective.

The Europeans spent time writing a history of the entire world from a Western perspective under the influence of their materialistic culture and philosophy influenced, wittingly or unwittingly, by Western fanaticism and religious fanaticism. This resulted in errors and deviations in their history, a consequence of their indifference to many life-values without which a history of life cannot be legitimate and without which an explanation of events and outcomes cannot be correct. It was another effect of their fanaticism which caused them to consider Europe to be the eternal axis and centre of the world. And also because they were indifferent to other factors which impacted on human history and considered as insignificant factors which were not European.

We proceeded to take history from the hands of Europe just as we take the same mistakes that it committed. There are errors in methodology, showing indifference to many values and factors; errors in perception, a result of looking at human life from one angle alone; and errors in the conclusions drawn.

This book in front of me is an example of a history which looks at all matters, all factors and at all values, notwithstanding their differences. The reader probably did not expect from a Muslim, who has full confidence in the strength of the ʾIslāmic spirit and ardently desires the return of world leadership to ʾIslām, to speak about [...] industrial, military, administrative and modern intellectual readiness. The reader probably did not expect him to speak about commercial and economic independence.

It encompasses a proper perception of all human values. It is through this proper perception that he proceeds with his historical presentation and comprehensive direction of the ʾIslāmic community. It is in this respect that this book is to be considered an example of history as Muslims ought to receive it, completely independent of influence from European ideals, ideals which are lacking in overall balance, justice and accuracy.[134]

An example of his historical writings

The best known historical works of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan are: *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam*, *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwah* and *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*. However, the example that I have selected to introduce the reader to his

[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 102-03.

[134] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn* (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-ʿĀlam li al-Kitāb al-ʾIslāmī, 4th edn. n.d.), pp. 26-27.

historical writing is his introduction to his father's book, *al-Hind fī al-ʿAhd al-ʾIslāmī*. It contains the gist of his understanding of the Muslims' contribution to the history and culture of peoples and nations:

This is the story of Spain which the Muslims called al-ʾAndalus. The world knew very little about it, so little that it neither pleased the soul nor aroused hopes. When this country came into the hands of the Arab Muslims, or into the embrace of ʾIslām to use a more correct expression, it moved from darkness to light, the earth opened up its treasures and poured out its bounties. It became the desire of conquerors, the song of poets, and the subject of historians and geographers. It was the paradise of the world, the market of knowledge, the refuge of scholars and the stage of poets. It was its own school in jurisprudence, poetry, literature, philosophy, and structural engineering. Marsiyyah, Valencia, Jiyyān, Shāṭibah, Cordova, ʾIshbīliyah and Granada, all flourished there. It had the city of al-Zahrāʾ and the al-Ḥamrāʾ (Alhambra) palace.

This is the story of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkistan after the ʾIslāmic conquests. They were all like stagnant water which had become brackish. They were trampled upon by the Romans and Persians who were enjoying the treasures and produce of these lands at the expense of their workers and farmers. Before the Muslim conquest of these lands, they did not possess any particular disposition for civilisation, sciences and crafts. They did not have any renowned scholars, poets, jurists, legislators, lawyers, inventors, and distinguished thinkers and artisans, whose names reverberated through the horizons, with whose writings people travelled, whose voice the world heard from one end to the other, and whose ideas and researches were heard in the east and west. But once ʾIslām came, we find Basrah, Kufa, Mosul and Baghdad in Iraq; Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Nablus, ʾIslāmic Jerusalem, Tarābalis and Ḥumāt in Syria; Fostat, Qaṭāʾiʿ,[135] Cairo, Asyūṭ, Mansoura and Dimietta in Egypt; Samarqand, Bukhārā, Tashkent and Khorezm in Turkistan; Shahri-Rey, Hamadan, Shiraz, Ṭūs[136] and Isfahan in Iran.[137] Countless distinguished figures emanated from all these places.

[...] This is the story of North Africa from Libya to Marrakesh. These lands were known merely for their toughness, chivalry, unyielding nature and resistance against conquerors. Their inhabitants, the Berbers, were icons of ferocity and high-mindedness, their preoccupation was with internal wars, they adhered strictly to ancient tribal customs, with no refined language, no fine civilisation, no comprehensible religion and no famous city until the arrival of ʾIslām. We then saw al-Qayrawān, Fes, Meknes, Marrakesh, Beja, Sousse, Surquṣṭah, Bgayet, Talmasān and Tunis. They produced renowned scholars in *ḥadīth*, Qurʾānic *tasfīr*, *fiqh*, *taṣawwuf*, poetry, literature, prose, history and philosophy. It would be a very long list if we were to name all of them. They had ʾIslāmic institutes of learning like Jāmiʿ al-Qarawiyyīn and Jāmiʿ al-Zaytūniyyah from which *ʾAʾimmah* in various sciences and disciples qualified and taught. They left

[135] al-Qaṭāʾiʿ is the ancient capital of Egypt founded by ʾAḥmad ibn Ṭulūn (d. 884/270 AH), which was incorporated into Cairo by the Fāṭimiyyah dynasty.

[136] An anciet city in the Iranian province of Razavi Khorasan.

[137] Author's note within the quoted text, "We mentioned a few of the cities which shone in ʾIslāmic history. Their large number does not allow us to list them all."

behind works which have continued to exist while the Arabic language and ʾIslāmic sciences existed.

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Languages and literature

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's proficiency in Persian, in addition to Arabic and Urdu languages, enabled him to benefit from the works of ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-ʾAḥad Sirhindī and ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm, and his son, ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz. He studied the English language to the extent that he was able to directly access its reference works. His fluency in Arabic writing and

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One consequence of his extraordinary command of Arabic was that he was able to serve as a bridge between the Indian subcontinent and the Arabic-speaking world, to address them in their own language about the concerns that they all shared for the well-being of ʾIslām and the Muslims. His Arab readers were deeply impressed and moved by the scholarship and the literary accomplishment of his writing. In the introduction to Shaykh Nadwī's book about the *daᶜwah* and *jihād* of ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜIrfān Shahīd, Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Ṭanṭāwī wrote, "I had almost lost my confidence in literature when I was unable to find that high melody that was sung by the poets from al-Sharīf al-Raḍī to al-Buraᶜī. When I read this book I found that it was in fact poetry written in prose."[142] al-Ṭanṭāwī says in his introduction to Shaykh Nadwī's book, *al-Muslimūn fī al-Hind:*

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His taste for elevated expression

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan being himself a practitioner, was very sensitive to the power of words that move the heart, the magical quality that, in words and their arrangement joins meaning and music. In his own work he combined the concern and intellect of a scholar with the spirt, heart, and ear of a poet, a combination rarely found in one and the same person. ʾUstādh Muḥammad al-Majdhūb said:

> A person who closely examines the writings of Shaykh Nadwī will perceive that his literary expressions have a certain enchantment which is only found among very notable personalities who have a deep knowledge of the mysteries of words, who have interacted with them, and whose hearts have been most affected by what they were composing. This is the chief trait which people of spiritual taste possess from among those who have studied the Qurʾān.[144]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan relished the same qualities in the writers and poets he read. ʾUstādh ʿAbd al-Quddūs ʾAbū Ṣāliḥ recollects:

> He would become excited and be enraptured by poetry. He memorised many lines of ʾIqbāl about whom he wrote a book. On one occasion, he heard some poetry of Dr ʿAdnān al-Naḥwī at one of the League's conferences in Istanbul. Dr ʿAdnān was one of the senior poets of the League. When the latter completed rendering his poem, the Shaykh commented by saying, "I had thought that the days of Arabic poetry were over. But this poem has affirmed to me that it is still going well."
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> What can you say of a human being whose tongue was softened by the Qurʾān, in whose flesh and blood the Qurʾān became fully interfused, which flowed in him as the spirit flows in the body, whose essence captivated and overwhelmed his heart, indeed, the Qurʾān was poured into his heart and took control over him in a manner that is known only to God. If, in light of all that, his own speech is not divine revelation (*waḥy*), then as the poet Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfiʿī said, "it came by way of *waḥy*: if not itself proof of it, yet it is surely from among its proofs. It is the *waḥy* that paved the road of speech for him and subjected it to him. How richly fertile the land, after the flood flowed over it."

The following passages are from Shaykh Nadwī's introduction to his father's book, *al-Hind fī al-ʿAhd al-ʾIslāmī*:

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> The Muslims, by virtue of the moral and humane teachings which they received from the school of Muḥammad ﷺ are the most faithful of peoples and communities to the country which gave birth to them, brought them up, or gave them refuge and embraced them. They are the most obedient children to those spiritual mothers, the most ardent servants of God in expressing gratitude and acknowledging grace and due; most passionate about recording events, conserving traces, bringing relics to the fore, making landmarks visible, exhibiting rarities, probing for facts, pursuing the truth, accuracy and trustworthiness in reporting and narrating incidents and events. Their inclination for history which accompanied them on their first journey and at the dawn of their flowering helped them in this regard. They were also assisted by the nature of investigation that attached itself to their life and manners, ever since they turned their attention to the science of *Ḥadīth* and *Riwāyah* (narration), formalised the science of *ʾUṣūl*, and the science of *ʾAsmāʾ al-Rijāl*. They were thus the leaders in academic investigation and the bearers of the science of verified history in many of the countries to which they went.
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when ʾAllāh wills to impose on it strong lights of knowledge and research; then God sends the Muslims to such a land. They adopt it as their homeland, place of residence, place of earning a livelihood and their place of burial. They do not consider it to be a milking cow or a riding camel, milking its udders, riding on its back, shaving its wool, and then leaving it weak, emaciated, plucked off and deformed. They do not consider themselves to be like a sponge which absorbs liquid from one place and pours it out in some other.[146] Instead, the Muslims gave to these lands of India the best that they had of ideology, message, morals, customs, skills, capabilities, organisation and administration. They devoted themselves to these lands with brilliant intellect, fine perception, elevated taste, affectionate disposition, and an expert and astute hand. They converted these lands from pastoral to urbanised life, and from an era of childhood to an era of energetic youth. These lands experienced security after having lived in fearful insecurity, and they became orderly after having been chaotic. The land revealed its splendour, civilisation reached its peak. Desert wastes and arid lands were converted into populous cities and fertile lands. Forest wildernesses were converted into splendid orchards, and wild trees into fruit-bearing trees. Sciences that had been unknown to the past peoples were born. Disciplines and modes of civilisation and rule that had been unknown in the past came to the fore. Commerce spread and agriculture flourished. It was as if, during the ʾIslāmic era, these lands were re-born, this time wearing clothes.[147]

[146] As was the case with the British in India, the French in Algeria and Morocco, and the Italians in Libya and Cyrenaica.
[147] ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī, *al-Hind fī al-ʿAhd al-ʾIslāmī*, pp. 11-13.

IV. HIS WRITINGS

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan wrote a sizeable number of works in Arabic and Urdu, many of which have been translated into English, French, Turkish, Bengali, Indonesian and other languages. His writings together with his extensive journeys for *daʿwah* and teaching are evidence of his tireless energy and commitment to serve ʾIslām and the Muslim community. He used to say, "A madrasah knows neither leave nor holiday."[148]

The general effect of his writings is to deepen and enlighten faith and reinforce confidence in its relevance for life, to guide the individual away from extremism towards moderation, and to guide the community from divisive factionalism towards solidarity and co-operation. His works have a characteristic style and savour that delighted many. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī expressed that delight most succinctly, "In each I experience a Ḥasanī Nadwī breeze, which always combines the arguments of an analytical mind with the enlightenment of a believing heart. Likewise, it combines a scholar's wide knowledge with a powerful writer's gift for masterly expression."[149]

Shaykh Nadwī's writings can be divided into two groups. The books on specific themes systematically presented, of which the most distinguished are *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn*, *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwah*, *al-Ṣirāʿ Bayn al-Fikrah al-ʾIslāmiyyah wa al-Fikrah al-Gharbiyyah* and *al-ʾArkān al-ʾArbaʿah*. And the books which are collections of lectures, articles and speeches, composed under different circumstances and on different occasions, which nevertheless have a concern or theme that connects them, books like *al-Nubūwwah wa al-ʾAnbiyāʾ fī Ḍawʾ al-Qurʾān*, *ʾIlā al-ʾIslām min Jadīd*, *al-Ṭarīq ʾilā al-Madīnah* and *Rawāʾiʿ ʾIqbāl*.

In addition to those two groups of writings, he wrote many book introductions on a variety of subjects. It is not practicable to present these introductions here. However, it is worthwhile to indicate briefly his view of what makes a good introduction, as this tells us why he gave his time to this task. An introduction, he says, can turn into a sort of commercial *selling* of a book or its author with artificial or exaggerated praise. That is not worth doing. Rather, an introduction should be:

> A testimony and an honest declaration, both of which have rules, etiquette and responsibilities. […] An introduction must have additional information, shed light on the subject and objectives of the book, on the life of the author, his position among contemporary scholars, intellectual make up, academic training, and the motives that prompted him to write on this subject despite there being other books written on it.

[148] Source; author's own quote of Shaykh Nadwī's statement.
[149] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil ʾAʿlām*, p. 81.

[…] There has to be an intellectual, natural or scholarly relationship between the person writing the introduction and the subject of the book. And likewise, a strong relation with the author that enables him to perceive his intellectual, academic and emotional make-up. He must know whether the book is about an academic, literary, intellectual or *daʿwah* subject; and the extent of the author's devotion to his subject, specialisation and sacrifices in that field, and firmness in knowledge and religion; and his acquisition of knowledge and religion from recognised specialists in that field if the book is about a religious subject such as *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, etc.

The introduction must be a response to a stimulus, a response to and realisation of a desire that formed in him after reading the book, prompting him to write the introduction, making that task appealing and agreeable for him in the sense that if he abstains from writing the introduction he considers himself failing in a duty to express his feelings and impressions, an urge in the heart of Yaʿqūb ﷺ which he did not fulfil. That is a fair and true introduction which has impact and usefulness.[150]

When he began writing

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan began writing in Arabic and Urdu from an early age. It is worth citing at length his essay, composed when he was seventeen, which he sent to Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, the editor of the periodical, *al-Manār*. It was published in May 1931 (Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1349) under the title, *Ḥawl al-Nashʾah al-ʾIslāmiyyah fī al-Hind: Tarjumah al-Sayyid al-ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ʿIrfān Shahīd Mujaddid al-Qarn al-Thālith ʿAshar*. The first part of the essay is translated below. It is remarkable for the maturity of its language and style, and the conviction of its opening with citations from the Qurʾān, a practice that he continued throughout his life:

Regarding the norm (*sunnah*) of God, "You will never find any change in the norm of God" (*Sūrat al-Fatḥ*, 48: 23). Gods' norm has always and will always be to send to mankind one to remind them, to bear good news and to warn when Satan has led them astray and they have completely forgotten, "Those who forgot God and so God caused them to forget their own souls" (*Sūrat al-Ḥashr*, 59: 19).

We find man remembering something and never forgetting it. Then he disregards it totally as though he never remembered it at all, "Man is, above all else, most contentious" (*Sūrat al-Kahf*, 18: 54); "We had taken a covenant from ʾĀdam before this, but he forgot and We did not find any resolve in him" (*Sūrah Ṭā Hā*, 20: 115); "But You let them and their forefathers enjoy [life] to the extent that they forgot Your remembrance. They were a people doomed to destruction" (*Sūrat al-Furqān*, 25: 18); "When they forgot the advice given to them, We opened to them the doors of everything until, while they revelled in all the things that were given to them, We seized them all of a sudden. Then, at that time, they despaired of all hope" (*Sūrat al-ʾAnʿām*, 6: 44); "When they forgot what they had been exhorted with, We saved those who were forbidding evil, and We seized the sinners in a dreadful punishment because of their disobedience" (*Sūrat al-ʾAʿrāf*, 7: 165); "For their having broken their covenant, We cursed them and We hardened their hearts. They distort the

[150] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, p. 10.

word from its context and they forgot to derive benefit from the advice that was given to them" (*Sūrat al-Māʾidah*, 5: 13); "Do not be like those who forgot God and so God caused them to forget their own selves" (*Sūrat al-Ḥashr*, 59: 19).

Reminding is therefore essential and it can never be dispensed with. "Relate to them the story of Nūḥ. When he said to his people: 'O people! If it has weighed heavily upon you that I stand and I advise you of the signs of God, then know that I have placed my trust in God. Decide, then, your course of action and gather your associates'" (*Sūrah Yūnus*, 10: 71); "And remind them of the days of God" (*Sūrah ʾIbrāhīm*, 14: 5); "So continue reminding them. You are only a reminder" (*Sūrat al-Ghāshiyah*, 88: 21).

Muḥammad ﷺ was the seal of all the Prophets, "Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men. Rather, he is the Messenger of God and the seal of all Prophets" (*Sūrat al-ʾAḥzāb*, 33: 40). It was through him that God perfected His religion for mankind and completed his favour on them.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan then discusses the renewers and reformers of the ʾIslāmic community:

The Messenger of God ﷺ said, "A group from my community will continuously remain upholding the truth. Those who oppose them will not be able to harm them." Narrated by ʾImām al-Bukhārī, ʾImām Muslim[151] and others. It is stated in the *Sunan*, "God shall send at the beginning of every century a person who will renew for this community its religion." Narrated by ʾAbū Dāwūd and others.[152]

Those who renewed the religion for the ʾIslāmic community continued to come. They would awaken the community from its lengthy slumber and inject the spirit of life and activity into it.

I hope that Sayyid ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ʿIrfān is the reviver of the past century. I have full confidence in that being so, *ʾin shāʾ ʾAllāh*. It was from him that the era of ʾIslāmic awakening commenced and to him is the credit for the present uprising.

Shaykh Nadwī discusses the general condition of India during his youth:

The political war which took place between the Muslims and Jesuits in the eighth century resulted in the end of ʾIslāmic leadership with the departure of ʾIslāmic zeal and passion for the honour of the ʾIslāmic community. The ʾIslāmic world lost its energy and spirit. Consequently, ʾIslām only remained in name, and nothing but the customs of religion remained.

Political events inundated India. Corrupt people began increasingly to spread corruption there. They began planting the seeds of sedition in order to bring about a revolution in the leadership. There was no one to curb their defiance and annihilate them. Revolution after revolution followed. They rebelled, transgressed and spread corruption, causing the paths to comfort and tranquillity to be cut.

When the British occupied India, they began playing with its politics and adopted the policy of *divide and rule*. They fanned the flames of enmity between the rulers and kings of India. The battle between them intensified and they began

[151] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-Manāqib*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ʾImārah*, b. *Qawlih lā Tazāl Ṭāʾifat min ʾUmmatī*.
[152] ʾAbū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, k. *al-Malaḥim*, b. *Mā Yudhkar fī Qarn al-Miʾah*.

killing each other. Together with these internal battles, the British were at war with another nation, namely the French. The Indian rulers and the French were defeated, and the British came to power.

As for the rulers of Delhi, they were left like hollow trunks of date-palms or like blocks of timber propped aginst a wall. When Sulṭān Tīpū, who was fighting the British and defending the Muslims, was martyred in 1799/1213 AH, the land of India became constricted for the Muslims, almost swallowing them up completely.

The distinguishing mark of the Arabs is that when they entered a place, they changed its religion, civilisation, society, culture, behaviour and language without any force or compulsion. The residents submitted voluntarily to them, with love and respect, by virtue of their pure sentiments, nobility, piety, and excellent dealings.

As for the kings and conquerors of India, they abandoned these pure sentiments. Their resort was their greed, they invaded and conquered for it. They ruled over India as long as God willed. The majority of them trampled over the injunctions and regulations of ʾIslām. This is manifest from their abhorrent actions which every human being - let alone a religious person - would detest.

When the Tīmūrid dynasty established their power […] They made a mockery of the Qurʾān. In fact, calling to it and holding to it was accounted by them as an unforgivable sin. There was therefore no translation of the Qurʾān in any language except the Persian translation attributed to Shaykh al-Saʿdī. When Shaykh ʿAllāmah Walī ʾAllāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Dihlawī translated the Qurʾān, he feared for his life and was compelled to emigrate from India.

As for *ḥadīth*, the only thing that remained were narrations and tales like those of *A Thousand and One Nights*. The people would prostrate before graves as they did before God. The grave was their *qiblah* towards which they turned, and their refuge to which they resorted at times of hardship and need. They would beautify it, embellish it, circumambulate (*ṭawāf*) it and devote themselves to it. Fairs would be held at a grave and processions would assemble there. A person was satisfied with his *shaykh* as a guide, as one who would lead him to success. When a person passed away, a paper on which his shaykh's name and spiritual genealogy were written would be buried with him under the assumption that this paper would protect him from the punishment of the grave.

Then the Ṣūfiyyah, those of them who were engaged in innovated *taṣawwuf*, permitted what God made unlawful, regarded evil as good, and falsehood as truth. They transgressed the limits and committed acts of excess. They followed their whims and desires and thereby went astray and led others astray. They cast aside the Book of God and considered their religion to be a game, an amusement, an object of enjoyment and a form of entertainment. Satan beautified all that they were doing. ʾIslām was like Christianity, nothing but the assertions, beliefs and names which they accorded to it in order to keep away from action.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan wrote his first book in Urdu, *Sīrah Sayyid ʾAḥmad Shahīd*, when he had not yet reached twenty-five years old. ʿAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī wrote the introduction which was very well received. When the Aligarh Muslim University asked him to prepare a syllabus for their graduates in religious education, he wrote *ʾIslāmiyyāt* for use as a textbook. He compiled other books for students of the Arabic madāris in India, among them:

Mukhtārāt fi al-ʾAdab al-ʿArabī (1940/1358 AH) was used as a textbook at Dār al-ʿUlūm and some universities; for children *Qaṣaṣ al-Nabiyyīn* was provided for students to read and practise Arabic, as well as, *al-Qirāʾah al-Rāshidah* between 1942-44/1360-62 AH.

He started writing his famous book *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn?* in 1944/1362 AH and completed it in 1947/1366 AH. Its Urdu translation was published in India before his first *ḥajj* journey in 1947/1366 AH. Also in 1947/1366 AH he wrote a booklet entitled *ʾIlā Mumaththilī al-Bilād al-ʾIslāmiyyah*, addressed to the Muslim and Arab delegates who took part in the Asian Conference in Delhi under the auspices of the Indian Prime Minister at the time, Jawaharlal Nehru. It was the first of his writings to be distributed in Ḥijāz, during his first trip there.

In 1958/1377 AH he wrote a book concerning the Qādiyāniyyah upon the instruction of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī, the book was entitled *al-Qādiyānī wa al-Qādiyāniyyah*. He wrote *al-Ṣirāʿ Bayn al-Fikrah al-ʾIslāmiyyah wa al-Fikrah al-Gharbiyyah fī al-ʾAqṭār al-ʾIslāmiyyah* in 1965/1384 AH, *al-ʾArkān al-ʾArbaʿah* in 1967/1386 AH, *al-ʿAqīdah wa al-ʿIbādah wa al-Sulūk* in 1980/1400 AH, *Ṣuratān Mutaḍādatān li Natāʾij Juhūd al-Rasūl al-ʾAʿẓam wa al-Muslimīn al-ʾAwāʾil ʿInda ʾAhl al-Sunnah wa al-Shīʿah* in 1984/1404 AH, and *al-Murtaḍā* on the life of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ﷺ in 1988/1408 AH.

ʾIslāmic thought

The most common posture of Muslim writers in the first half of the fourteenth century AH, be it in the Arab world or in India or Turkey or Iran, was defensive. Reading their books one feels that they are speaking as if from within a choking storm of allegations, obliged to mount a defence of something which is the subject of innumerable accusations and in whose favour there are only very feeble arguments, or arguments long since discredited. The leaders of this apologetic style in Egypt were Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Rifāʿah al-Ṭahṭāwī and Qāsim ʾAmīn; in India they were Sir Sayyid ʾAḥmad Khān, Sayyid ʾAmīr ʿAlī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khudā Baksh and Munshī Chirag ʿAlī. Their defensive posture was the result of their education and upbringing, the infiltration of their intellectual perspectives, and the occupation of their cultural horizons, by a triumphant European civilisation. To them the ways of this civilisation seemed beyond dispute, requiring no review or reservation, with room for no alternatives other than to accommodate to their supremacy or fade from existence. Thus, far from challenging or confronting European civilisation, these writers did not (unlike some of their European contemporaries) investigate with any seriousness, the foundations on which its power rests or its dark realities; social, economic political, moral, which were the fruits of its progress and which, its further progress was to darken further still. Hence their argument was that Muslims

should, as far and as fast as possible, *liberate* themselves from their own cultural idioms and adopt those of their conquerors. To save face the Muslims might, as it were, keep ʾIslām as a marker of identity, but by no means should they expect from ʾIslām any practical guidance as to how to define their social economic or political aspirations. In sum, writers like these, whatever else they believed, also believed in the accusations against ʾIslām of its most implacable accusers and were duly rewarded by them with public recognition as *moderates*, *realists*, *rationalists*, *modernisers* and the like.

It is by God's grace that the mind and conscience of Shaykh Nadwī formed in a familial environment with long roots in a learned understanding and love of ʾIslām, of its faith and practice and its cultural history and traditions. It was an environment that took pride in the generous, assimilative temperament of ʾIslām; rejoiced in the diversity of the languages, peoples and regions that it brought together into mutually enriching relations; delighted in ʾIslāmic literature, especially in literary biographies that commemorated the writers and scholars who travelled many lands, maintaining the links between centres of ʾIslāmic learning while also strengthening each other's faith and commitment to God, His Book and His Messenger ﷺ, and the way of life enjoined by them. This was an environment practically immune to the temptations of Western civilisation, and scarcely impressed, let alone overawed, by its worldly power and prestige or by its claims to historical finality. The devout scholarly upbringing of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan saved him from the kind of withdrawn religiosity that takes no responsibility for the societal ethos and public affairs of the Muslims. It also saved him from the kind of narrow militancy so obsessed with the political ill-fortune of the Muslims that it neglects or defers, and therefore is not disciplined by the prmary need truly to love God and His Messenger ﷺ, to build a stable regime of worship with a longing to improve its quality, its attention, understanding and devotion.

There was nothing in the posture or output of the defensive writers mentioned above that could appeal to Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. They had, like defeated generals, surrendered more or less all of their intellectual territory and nothing remained of their inner forces with which to mount a claim to recover their former territory. The first writers whose work conformed to his own mind and conscience and stirred his soul with confidence in the legacy of ʾIslām and hope for its renewal and reform, were the poet Muḥammad ʾIqbāl, the journalist and diplomat Muḥammad ʾAsad and the writer, activists Mawlānā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb. He neither followed nor agreed with these writers in all of their positions, arguments or actions, but he learnt from them, especially their critical approach. About Muḥammad ʾAsad and Mawlānā Mawdūdī he said, "I saw them dealing with Western civilisation as an academic issue worthy of debate and discussion, or like a cadaver presented for dissection at a medical school. They speak on intellectual, social and civilisational issues and engage in comparative study of civilisations, religions, views and philosophies with

confidence, strength and honour."[153] About Sayyid Quṭb's *al-ᶜAdālah al-ʾIjtimāᶜiyyah fī al-ʾIslām*, which was unexpectedly presented to him by its author when the two of them were in Makkah, he said that it was like suddenly finding again a long lost treasure, "The author of this book had freed himself from the apologetic style that had been the feature of ʾIslāmic writers for a long time. He preferred a style that took up the offensive, or a face to face assessment of Western thought in its broadest meaning. The thing that most appealed to me in this book was the author's confidence in the eligibility, eternity and superiority of the message he invites, and that it is the only message with which humanity can achieve prosperity."[154]

The background to *Mādhā Khasir al-ᶜĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn?*

This is the most popular of his books. It was written at the most appropriate time and was thus well received by the people. It was through this book that his voice reverberated in the Arab world and his name spread in the ʾIslāmic world. I will go into some detail on the subject matter of this book after relating the background to the book.

The first edition of it appeared in 1950/1369 AH published by Lajnah al-Taʾlīf wa al-Tarjumah wa al-Nashr in Cairo under the auspices of its head, Dr ʾAḥmad ʾAmīn Baygh. The latter wrote to Shaykh Nadwī from Cairo on 11th August 1950 (26th Shawwāl 1369 AH) while he was in Makkah, giving him the good news of the book's publication:

> I am pleased to inform you that your book has been printed. I have sent 100 copies for you to Lucknow in a box. I wrote an introduction to it and attached a list of printing mistakes which took place. You will most probably be pleased with it when you reach Egypt safely and see it first hand. I was able to complete this task despite the illness which afflicted me in summer. May God cure me and I hope for your supplications at the Kaᶜbah.[155]

Dr ʾAḥmad ʾAmīn deserves credit for the publication of this book. However, his introduction damaged its reputation. He did not write it with energy and passion but he wrote as it were, mechanically in fulfilment of an unwelcomed obligation. He did not believe in the fundamental thinking of the book or, at least, did not throw himself wholeheartedly behind it. When ᶜAbd ʾAllāh ibn Ḥusayn, the King of the Hāshimī Kingdom of Jordan, read the book, he commented, "This introduction has done a disservice to this book."[156]

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[153] *Ibid*., p. 135.
[154] *Ibid*., pp. 136-37.
[155] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAᶜlām*, pp. 117-18 (It was perhaps this illness that prevented him from writing a detailed foreword appropriate to the book).
[156] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, p. 140.

IV. His Writings

Following its publication, Shaykh Nadwī met Shahīd Sayyid Quṭb in Egypt on Friday 24th February 1950 (17th Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1370 AH). He had read the book and found it in agreement with his way of thinking, and in conformity with his commentary on the Qurʾān and his style. The book viewed and spoke about ʾIslām as an international and eternal message created to endure and flourish, to lead and show the way forward. ʾIslām alone had the right to guide and instruct. Honour and superiority belonged to its adherents alone. As for the other religions, their star had set and their era had passed. As for the civilisations which were based on the other religions, the oil of their lamp was finished and its wick burnt out. Shaykh Nadwī asked him to write a new introduction to his book. He agreed and wrote one with the feeling and sincerity the work demanded, and with the force and zeal characteristic of his writings.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan himself recounted the story behind *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam*, explained the thinking, and the scholarly, psychological, and religious factors which prompted it. His own words best summarise his state of mind when composing the book that transformed him from a regional to an international figure:

> Many of the respected readers may not know that this was one of my early writings. It marked the beginning of my history in writing. I wrote this book when I had just passed the age of thirty.[157] It was too large a task for someone like me to write at such a young age, and in a country far from the centres of the Arabic language literature and culture. I was born in India, grew up there and was educated there. I had never travelled outside India. The first journey that I undertook was the blessed journey which God enabled me to undertake in order to fulfil the duty of *ḥajj* in 1947/1366 AH, three years after writing this book. In short, therefore, it was an academic enterprise for which I was neither prepared nor a suitable candidate. It was boldness to take up this subject which was more suited to a pen bigger than mine, an intellect more expansive than mine, and an experience in writing longer and wider than mine. But God does whatever He wills.
>
> I felt a mysterious and persistent urge which I could not overcome. It was as though someone were driving me to write on this subject. Had I consulted my reason, reckoned the experiences of authors and their abilities and eminence, I would have retreated and pulled back from such thoughts. Had I mentioned this to one of the gifted scholars and proficient authors, they would have advised me to pull back from this scholarly and intellectual battle. However, there was some good in the fact that I did not consult anyone.
>
> The Arabic sources that I would have available to consult for this subject were few. The reason is that the era was close to the Second World War. Ties between India and the Arab countries were by and large cut off. India imported very few of the academic treasures. Historical and cultural source books written in the Arabic language were found in abundance in the Arab countries, especially in Egypt.

[157] He wrote the book between 1942-43/1363-64 AH.

> As for the academic sources in the Urdu and English languages, these were plentiful and accessible to me. Lucknow, the city of knowledge and culture, had rich libraries which had the latest English books and encyclopaedias. I remained in touch with these libraries, I borrowed and studied books from them. I also benefited from some private libraries. God had made it easy for me in the sense that I had recently studied the political, social, religious, moral and cultural history of Europe in great detail and depth. I paid particular attention to the subject of the conflict between religion and science, the palace and the church, the history of ethics and its development in Europe, the factors which gave it a special character leading it to this materialistic end, and which had such an all-encompassing and decisive impact on the destinies of the peoples of the east and west.
>
> Besides this, the history of the eastern and ʾIslāmic regions, their religions, movements and philosophies, the history of ʾIslām and the Muslims, the history of the Arabs before and after ʾIslām. All of this, I obtained from books which centred around this subject and from Arabic poetry and literature. It was relatively easier for me by virtue of my religious, literary and historical training, and because the relevant materials were accessible in the large library of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, private libraries, and by virtue of my constant contact with the translation and publishing circles in the Indian subcontinent, my reading of academic and progressive periodicals and papers, and the academic research and studies that were published.
>
> By virtue of the above, the excellent intellectual and personal formation of one believing in the eternity of the message of ʾIslām, the leadership of Muḥammad ﷺ for the human generations across the centuries, and in the reality of the flaw inherent in Western civilisation and the temperament of the Western nations, which is constant, manifested and embodied in their leaders. All this was a consequence of the training of my older brother Dr ʿAbd al-ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī, rector of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, a unique example of combining the ʾIslāmic and modern Western cultures, his deep understanding of ʾIslām, and his intellectual balance which was far from extremism and radicalism.
>
> All this enabled me to benefit from my multifarious studies, which were contradictory at times and confusing to many readers who are still intellectually immature, and to derive definite and specific results from them, "From between dung and blood, pure milk, pleasant to those who drink it" (*Sūrat al-Naḥl*, 16: 66). This increased my confidence in the practicality of ʾIslām to lead and guide in every time, and to believe that Muḥammad ﷺ is the seal of the Messengers, the leader of all, and the one who lights the paths.
>
> I realised the danger and importance of this subject, my tender age, the lack of assistants, and the novelty and peculiarity of the subject of this book. The fact of the matter was that I had no choice. Instead, I was led and it seemed as if a thought came to my heart and said to me, 'It is essential to write a book on this subject.'
>
> One of the reasons why this book attracted the attention of many and caused astonishment to many was its innovative title: *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn?* (*What did the world lose by the decline of the Muslims?*) Do the Muslims have such a strong connection with human destiny and international conditions that it is permissible to ask: *What did the world lose by the decline of the Muslims?* Or to ask what profits and benefits the world will accrue from the progress of the Muslims and their acceptance of the leadership of humanity?

IV. His Writings

Prior to the writing of this book, people were in the habit of seeing Muslims through history as having fallen behind, or as simply viewing them as a nation among many. But the author of this book took courage and crossed these customary boundaries and came out of the conventional frame imposed on the Arab and non-Arab writers and authors. He wanted to look at the world from a Muslim perspective. And there is a vast difference between these two views. One view which looks at the Muslims from the perspective of the world, from the perspective of events which took place in the world, and from the perspective of developments which occurred in history. The Muslims are just another nation. They are subject to whatever happens in the world in a broad international frame. The general intellectual approach and the constant research line was: what did the world lose by such and such an event? What did the world lose by the fall of such and such a government? What did the Muslims lose on account of the major industrial revolution which took place in the West? What did the Muslims lose by the West's conquering of many strongholds of ʾIslām and the Muslims? What did the Muslims lose by their poverty in economics, politics and military strength?

This was the conventional practice to which the people were accustomed. However, God inspired me and opened my heart to write on the theme: What did the world lose by the decline of the Muslims? As though the Muslims were the international players on the world stage, not confined to a particular geographic location or to a specific political arena. Are the Muslims really in a position to say, 'The world will lose something with the decline of the Muslims.' Are the Muslims on such a level whereby it is permissible to say, 'The world lost something by the regress of Muslims and their falling behind in international leadership.' I fear that many ʾIslāmic writers who held high posts and had much experience did not think in this manner. The defacement of ʾIslāmic history - looking at it from a narrow angle and with an inferiority complex - afflicted the modern educated generation and tilted many reseachers into connecting the affair of the Muslims to the affair of the world and mankind. Where are the Muslims in international leadership? The Muslims are paupers, the Muslims are weak, the Muslims are ruled by the West, the Muslims are submitting to modern revolution. Can it be right to connect the movement of the world or of mankind to the movement of the Muslims and their condition?

No. Many people at that time did not believe that the Muslims held such importance, awe, influence and position as would make them eligible for this discussion and entitle an author to write a book in which he investigates the extent of the loss which humanity and the modern world suffered through the decline of the Muslims. The subject was dangerous, and the matter entailed an academic risk and hazard. However, God helped me in this regard.

I wrote this book hesitantly and fearfully because I was new to the field of writing, especially in the Arabic language.[158] My contact with the Arabic language was one of a student born and living far from the centres of Arabic culture, and the original centre of ʾIslāmic sciences. Doubts crept in: would this book be appreciated

[158] Shaykh Nadwī had at this point written the first two parts of the series *Qaṣaṣ al-Nabiyyīn*, the first three of *al-Qirāʾah al-Rāshidah*, and *Mukhtārāt min ʾAdab al-ʿArab*; all three were textbooks written for Muslim children studying Arabic in the religious institutes in India.

in the distant Arab ʾIslāmic lands? I therefore sent a list of its contents to Dr ʾAḥmad ʾAmīn Baygh, the head of Lajnah al-Taʾlīf wa al-Tarjumah wa al-Nashr in Egypt, and head of cultural affairs for the Arab League. His books, especially *Fajr al-ʾIslām* and *Duḥā al-ʾIslām*, were highly acclaimed by readers and research scholars. These books were the centre of discussions in intellectual circles. I myself was attracted to them and had studied them deeply. I agreed with most of his views and differed with him on certain points. I liked his focused style which flowed naturally. I wanted this book of mine to be published by this academic institute which, together with whatever it published, enjoyed high academic regard in the Arab east. The educated youth, those involved in academic research and subject studies, would read this book. I had no knowledge of the destiny that awaited the pages I had sent to him to provide a brief idea of the book, whose author was an unknown, with no academic lineage or legacy and with nothing to intercede and testify on his behalf.

I suddenly received a letter asking me for a sample from the book, and so I sent him an extract.

The themes of the book, the headings which provided an indication of its contents and the material and research which it comprised, all had a positive impact on the doctor. But he feared that a book written by a religious scholar who grew up and was educated far from the Western world would be overcome by a religious and literary temperament, as was the case with the scholars of al-ʾAzhar and other old religious institutes. He therefore asked me this question, "Did the author refer to foreign sources?" When I replied in the affirmative and sent a bibliography of English sources, the doctor was convinced, and informed me that the committee had resolved to print the book. He expressed his approval both from the literary viewpoint and in relation to its subject. The day I received this letter from the doctor was the happiest of my life. I have not forgotten it even until today.

Several months passed without my knowing about the progress of the book. It was in the year 1950/1369 AH that I suddenly saw a printed edition with the Syrian ambassador, ʾUstādh Jawād al-Murābiṭ, a member of al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī in Damascus. He had brought it from Cairo. He was expressing his astonishment at the depth of thinking of the *ʿulamāʾ* of India, citing this book as an example, a book which had fallen into his hands during his recent visit to Egypt. He did not know that he was talking to the book's author. The young unknown author was obviously overcome with joy when suddenly he saw his first written work published by one of the biggest publishing houses. He borrowed it from the ambassador and promised to return it after studying it. At the same time, he noted that the short introduction which Dr ʾAḥmad ʾAmīn had written did not contain that power which the author expected from a great ʾIslāmic writer such as Dr ʾAḥmad ʾAmīn. He was most reserved in expressing his thoughts about the book and its author.[159]

This was not a strange matter, even though it may have weighed heavily on the author, because every person who writes an introduction to a book does not necessarily share the sentiments of the subject matter. This is possible only if the person writing the introduction concurs with the thinking of the author and believes firmly in it. Not every research scholar and great writer, even if he may be on the level of Dr ʾAḥmad ʾAmīn, will agree that the world really lost out and that mankind really suffered a

[159] This reserve may be attributable to the illness he mentions in his letter: see, p. 60.

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themes. He notes its deployment of the term *jāhiliyyah* to designate not only the pre-ʾIslāmic period but also the resurgence and triumph of the materialistic spirit in the period after "the Muslims fell behind in their leadership."[162] He emphasises the comprehensiveness of its historical view, its examination of the areas in which the Muslims have fallen behind - intellectual, economic, industrial, military administrative - and the Muslims' need to imagine cultural as well as political sovereignty and independence. The book's argument entails "a proper perception of all human values. It is through this proper perception that he proceeds with his historical presentation and comprehensive direction of the ʾIslāmic community. It is in this respect that this book is to be considered an example of history as Muslims ought to receive it, completely independent of influence from Europeanism, which is lacking in overall balance, justice, and accuracy."[163]

Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam has fifteen sections presented in five chapters. The first chapter, *The era of ignorance* has two sections. Section one entitled *Humanity in the throes of death* surveys the religions in existence during the sixth and seventh centuries CE. It describes Christianity as an assemblage, with monasticism, of the Greek ideas and pagan customs of the period, which overlaid and perplexed any links with authentic monotheism. In the Roman territories where Christianity had settled, there were interminable credal or doctrinal controversies and struggles for political power to settle a controversy and define orthodoxy. For most of the social and intellectual elite, the principal use of religion was as a device by which to keep the masses in order. Moral and societal decadence deepened until the dominant concern was to acquire wealth by any means and then spend it upon luxuries and extravagant self-indulgence.

As for the Jews, they possessed the richest treasure of religious knowledge, and were closest in understanding of religious meanings and principles. But for centuries they had played no active role in civilisation and politics, being subjected to cruel oppression, tyranny, exiles and hardships. That long history of suffering, combined with their tribal pride and genealogical conceit, and their successful practice of usury, other trades being forbidden to them, produced a psychology not marked in any other people. Among its traits were excessive servility in time of weakness, tyranny and harshness in time of power, dissimulation and hypocrisy in their dealings with others.

The Persians shared and contested dominion over the southern and eastern Mediterranean with the Romans. Their moral foundations were no less shaky and unstable. There were centuries of conflict between Mani and the rebellious Mazda; their Chosroes were sanctified, their society rigidly hierarchical. Magianism became their religion and fire-worship their practice.

[162] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[163] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Their society lacked a comprehensive religion to train the soul, nurture good character, and provide a system to manage the economy and administration of the state in a way that benefits the people as a whole. Their elite were no different in their character and deeds from atheists and freethinkers.

As for India, paganism had reached such an extreme that almost anything could be considered and worshipped as a god. A rigid caste system had become established with extraordinary distinctions accorded to the Brahmins. The status of women was shameful, for example, a woman might have to serve several husbands, she could be won or lost in a bet. Over time, the land and peoples had become a stage without parallel for disgraceful ignorance, vulgar paganism, barbaric tyranny and social injustice.

The Arab people during the *jāhiliyyah* were distinguished for pride in eloquence and poetry, horsemanship and courage, zeal for their ancestral beliefs, strong memory, love for equality, strength of purpose, hospitality and trustworthiness. However, through protracted dissociation from prophethood and revelation, they had regressed in religion, made and worshipped idols that they believed could do them good or harm and bring them into favour with the greatest deity. God. Judaism and Christianity were known among them but had no particular influence on their manners or beliefs. Intense tribal rivalry and clan loyalty were the main factors in determining social relationships.

Section two surveys *The political and economic system during the jāhili era*. The era was characterised by tyrannical and autocratic rule in all the nations of the world. The political and economic systems in the Roman Empire did not differ much from those in the Persian Empire, the purpose of government in both cases being to collect taxes in order to tribute and convey them to the ruling elite. There were clear, mostly hereditary, distinctions between the classes of society, certain positions were reserved for certain families, according to relationship and favour with the ruler. The great mass of the population, farmers, craftsmen, traders and merchants, were burdened with heavy taxes to provide the means on which the rulers and their court depended for a life of luxury, and the materials and power needed to defend that life against internal and external threats. Khusro Parves, it is said, had 12,000 wives, 50,000 horses, and innumerable items of luxury and pomp. Shaykh Nadwī ends his account of *jāhiliyyah* with a citation from the chapter "The establishment of means and the correction of customs" in Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī's, *Ḥujjat ʾAllāh al-Bālighah*:

> When the non-Arabs and Romans ruled for many centuries, immersed in the pleasures of this world, forgetting the hereafter, Satan gained full control over them, absorbed them in the conveniences of life and vexed them with pride therein […] to the extent that they would look down on a notable among them if he wore a belt or crown less than 100,000 dirhams in value, or did not have a palatial home, water-way, bathroom and orchards; if he did not own swift animals, did not have handsome children, did not have sumptuous foods, beautiful clothes, etc. Whatever

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The Arab people during the *jāhiliyyah* were distinguished for pride in eloquence and poetry, horsemanship and courage, zeal for their ancestral beliefs, strong memory, love for equality, strength of purpose, hospitality and trustworthiness. However, through protracted dissociation from prophethood and revelation, they had regressed in religion, made and worshipped idols that they believed could do them good or harm and bring them into favour with the greatest deity. God. Judaism and Christianity were known among them but had no particular influence on their manners or beliefs. Intense tribal rivalry and clan loyalty were the main factors in determining social relationships.

Section two surveys *The political and economic system during the jāhili era.* The era was characterised by tyrannical and autocratic rule in all the nations of the world. The political and economic systems in the Roman Empire did not differ much from those in the Persian Empire, the purpose of government in both cases being to collect taxes in order to tribute and convey them to the ruling elite. There were clear, mostly hereditary, distinctions between the classes of society, certain positions were reserved for certain families, according to relationship and favour with the ruler. The great mass of the population, farmers, craftsmen, traders and merchants, were burdened with heavy taxes to provide the means on which the rulers and their court depended for a life of luxury, and the materials and power needed to defend that life against internal and external threats. Khusro Parves, it is said, had 12,000 wives, 50,000 horses, and innumerable items of luxury and pomp. Shaykh Nadwī ends his account of *jāhiliyyah* with a citation from the chapter "The establishment of means and the correction of customs" in Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī's, *Ḥujjat ʾAllāh al-Bālighah*:

> When the non-Arabs and Romans ruled for many centuries, immersed in the pleasures of this world, forgetting the hereafter, Satan gained full control over them, absorbed them in the conveniences of life and vexed them with pride therein [...] to the extent that they would look down on a notable among them if he wore a belt or crown less than 100,000 dirhams in value, or did not have a palatial home, waterway, bathroom and orchards; if he did not own swift animals, did not have handsome children, did not have sumptuous foods, beautiful clothes, etc. Whatever

you see of the kings in your country needs no further explanation. So all this entered their essential way of life and did not leave their hearts unless they were torn apart. This resulted in an incurable disease and a mighty calamity which entered all parts of social life. The markets, the towns, the rich and the poor were overpowered by and subjugated by it, enfeebled by it, and it caused much irremediable sorrow and grief. The reason was that all those items could only be acquired through spending huge amounts of money. And these monies could only be acquired by multiplying the taxes on the farmers, traders, etc., and imposing restrictions on them. If they refused to pay, they would fight and torture them. If they obeyed, they were treated like the donkeys and cattle used for irrigation, threshing grain and harvesting, who are kept only to fulfil a need and are not given a moment's respite from toil. This continued until the people did not even raise their heads to seek prosperity in the hereafter and indeed were unable to do so. Many a time you would find an entire region with not a single person who is concerned about his religion.[164]

The second chapter, *From jāhiliyyah to ʾIslām* has four sections. Section one is called *The programme of the Prophet ﷺ for reform and change*. The Shaykh depicts the state of the world that Muḥammad ﷺ faced, which was actually a miniature of the entire world. All the various elements of individual and collective life were in need of reform and a renewed vision. The Messenger ﷺ was not a local reformer or nationalist leader who wanted to prepare the oppressed Arabs to liberate themselves from Persians and Romans and replace them as rulers. Rather, he was sent to the whole of humanity to guide them from servitude to fellow humans to the servitude of God alone. His address was not to a particular people excluding others, but to the entire human race. He called to belief in God alone, to abandoning the worship of idols and Satan. He did not, as it were, approach the house that needed re-design and rebuilding from a window or side entrance, but "from the front door, and placed the keys into the lock of human nature, that tough lock which all the reformers in the *fatrah* (the period between one Prophet and another) could not open, nor every other who tried to open it with the wrong key." He called them to proclaim that there is none worthy of worship except God, to believe in him as God's Messenger, and to believe in the hereafter as the certain end for which this life is the preparation.

Section two recounts *The Muslims' journey from jāhiliyyah to ʾIslām*. For thirteen years the Prophet ﷺ called people to belief in God with a perfect resolve, despite the derision and the ever-intensifying persecution that he and his Companions ﷺ suffered. He liberated the souls of his Companions ﷺ from the influences, fears and vain desires of this world. It is then that they were ready for the *Hijrah* to Madīnah. There they established the first ʾIslāmic society, and it is from there that they set out to fight on twenty-seven occasions in ten years. The faith which the Messenger ﷺ planted in his Companions ﷺ

[164] Shāh Walī ʾAllāh, *Ḥujjat ʾAllāh al-Bālighah*, b. *ʾIqāmat al-ʾIrtifaqat wa ʾIṣlāḥ al-Rusum* (ed. Sayyid Sabiq; Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 187-88.

had a great impact in correcting their manners, morals and inclinations: in their pride with God and refusal to submit except to Him ﷻ alone, in their rare bravery, and disregard for the attractions of this life and for their own lives. Section three, on *The ʾIslāmic society*, explains the firm principles on which the *ʾummah* was based, the most important of them being the rejection of group fanaticism. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The one who calls for tribal solidarity is not of us, the one who fights for tribal solidarity is not of us, and the one who dies for tribal solidarity is not of us."[165] He made each accountable for all, "Every one of you is a shepherd and every one of you is accountable for his flock."[166] He commanded absolute obedience to God alone, against whose commands none can command disobedience. So his followers' motto became, "No obedience to the creature if it entails disobedience to the Creator."[167] Section four then tells, through the stories of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, Bilāl, Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, ʾAbū Sufyān and others, "How the Messenger of God converted the uncouth of *jāhiliyyah* into astonishing individual examples of humanity".

The third chapter, *The ʾIslāmic Era*, has three sections. Section one, on *The era of ʾIslāmic leadership* presents the key characteristics which qualified the *ʾAʾimmah* of the Muslims to be guides for all mankind after the Prophet ﷺ. The most important were people who possessed a revealed Book and a divine Sharīʿah, and they did not exercise authority without first undergoing moral training and purification of the self. That is why the great *ʾAʾimmah* were not advocates for a particular clan or tribe, nor for a particular gender, or linguistic community or region. In serving ʾIslām impartially they also served humanity as a whole. The era of *al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn* is presented as an example of a righteous society, whose good was extended, through the ʾIslāmic conquests, to many peoples. The effects of ʾIslāmic rule were positive, agriculture, commerce, manufacture, arts and sciences prospered, benefitting all classes of people, including non-Muslims. Wherever and for as long as the light of Prophethood remained strong among the Muslims, their impact on moral and spiritual life was positive, and in every society under their influence, the potential for human beings to live a good life pleasing to God, and to build a good and just society was improved.

The essential conditions for benefiting from that light, presented in section two on *Decline in ʾIslāmic life*, are *jihād*, a commitment to sacrifice comfort and current advantages for the sake of achieving higher goals, and *ʾijtihād*, the ability of a leader to make wise judgements in situations and on issues that, from time to time, arise unexpectedly. Shaykh Nadwī then explains that when people who did not possess these qualities took positions

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of authority in society, the causes for decline were in place and their effects unfolded. The separation of religious and political authority was followed by in-fighting among government officials, and deviations and innovations then spread. Only when the required qualities are found in a leader, do the Muslims' fortunes revive, as was the case with Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-ʾAyyūbī. Section three on *The role of the Ottoman leadership* extends this argument. Shaykh Nadwī mentions the expertise of Muḥammad (Meḥmet) al-Fātiḥ in the art of war and weaponry, the qualities of the Turks that enabled them for leadership of the Muslims and then as a result of the morality of the Ottoman elite, their decline. He stresses that the Muslims lost not hours and days, but entire generations which the European nations took advantage of, moving ahead in every field of human endeavour at breath-taking speed, "Compare the stride which ʾIslāmic Turkey made in the field of science with the great strides made by Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. You will find an astronomical difference. Its race on the field was like that of the race between the tortoise and the hare, with the exception that the hare is awake and continuing its work while the tortoise is overtaken by sleep and torpor."[168]

The fourth chapter, *The European Era*, has four sections. In the first, entitled *Materialistic Europe*, the author describes the most important trait of Western civilisation as its disregard for what cannot be perceived, giving religion the least role possible in defining and managing human affairs, and giving maximum attention to worldly life, how to secure its benefits and pleasures, and a disposition to nationalistic politics. Shaykh Nadwī notes that in Roman civilisation, which succeeded the Greeks, religion had no influence over the morals and politics of the society. He attributes the decadence that overtook the Christian-Roman world to the inability of a monastic religion to take control of the transgressing materialism around it. This led to corruption in the religious centres and to Popes competing against kings for worldly power, and against scholars for control of knowledge. Europe was starved of men of religion, and the church oppressed the men of learning. This resulted in a war against the offices and powers of religion and Europe turned back to materialism. Its religion today is materialism, not Christianity, with grave consequences for the search of knowledge and human psychology.

In *Nationality and nationalism in Europe*, the subject of section two, the author explains that the weakening of a unified church led to wars and the birth of nation-states, nationalistic politics and racist ideas, evils which the Europeans carried to other lands, including the Arab lands. He cites the adage 'A vessel only pours out the liquid that it contains' to underline the fact that the Muslims and Arabs could not and should not have expected improvement to flow from European domination either in their moral and spiritual lives, or

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in the way their societies are governed, "The ways of kings and conquerors have always differed from those of the Prophets, guides and reformers. The reality that the Qurʾān relates on the tongue of the queen of Sabaʾ [Sheba] is a contemporary reality, 'When kings invade a town, they ruin it, and they turn its noble people into the most abject'" (*Sūrat al-Naml*, 27: 34).

Section three, *Europe heads towards suicide*, is primarily concerned with intellectual discovery and technological inventions. Shaykh Nadwī says the ultimate aim of such inventions is to make religious and moral life irrelevant. All that has so far flowed from the conversion of knowledge into economic and military power has done more harm than good to mankind as a whole, and what will prove more devastating to humanity than the atom bomb will be produced by this civilisation. The arguments in section four *The spiritual losses of humanity during the era of European colonialism* explain that pessimism. Shaykh Nadwī holds that the decline in habits of worship, religious reflection and practice follows from assessing the moral worth of an action or policy by the material benefits that flow from it, "The European intellect is [...] unable to define the goodness and correctness of morals except by way of their materialistic benefits, in accordance with what pleasure and delight the society enjoys through them and the exultation which individuals experience." Public concern is focused on orderliness and non-hindrance of the business of generating and acquiring wealth and goods; since that matters most. Qualities such as "the affection and love of parents for their children, fidelity of spouses towards each other, and each safeguarding his or her chastity in the absence of the other" are of little concern. These "old-fashioned" values and their function in securing such goods as natural beneficence, solidarity, loyalty, neighbourliness, etc. "have been replaced by assumed and fabricated morals, gadgets, production, ethnicity and nationalism."[169]

The two sections of the final chapter, *ʾIslām's leadership of the world* recapitulate the themes of the book and end with a stirring, confident call to the Muslims, especially the Arabs, to take up their responsibility to rescue the world from the *jāhilī* direction into which all its peoples are being compelled by the hegemony of Europe and America. Shaykh Nadwī's confidence is based on the testimony of Muslim thinkers and the conviction of the early Muslims. Before the Muslim Arabs engaged the forces of the Persian empire in battle, a member of their embassy said to the Persian Emperor, "It is God who sent us to remove those who choose from the worship of slaves to the worship of God, from the constriction of the world to its expanse, from the injustices of religions to the justice of ʾIslām."[170]

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Along with that conviction, and by means of it, the Muslims of today must detach themselves from vain worldly pursuits, and set their sights on Paradise. They must acquire proficiency in the natural sciences, manufacturing, trade and the art of war, so as to become fully independent of the West in all aspects of life. To prepare for that, they must make appropriate arrangements, in accordance with the spirit and message of ʾIslām, to achieve full independence in the field of education.

The section on *The leadership of the Arab world* reminds us of the central position on the political world map of the Arab lands, the lands of those who have played the biggest role in the history of mankind. The Arabs as the bearers of ʾIslām, were able to establish a unifying civilisation over a vast stretch of territory, centred on the Fertile Crescent, which successors, including military conquerors, have not been able to reverse:

> What a great evolution took place in the history of the Arabs upon the commissioning of Muḥammad ﷺ! This was proclaimed by *Sūrat al-ʾIsrāʾ*.[171] What a great bounty God bestowed on the Arabs! He transported them from their peninsula where they had been killing one another, towards the outside world which they subsequently steered; from the limited tribal life which had constricted them to the expanse of humanity whom they supervised and directed.
>
> […] Their civilisation was the exemplar through whose emulation people gain glory and grandeur. The scholars of religion give preference to it over other civilisations. They label all other civilisations which are opposed to it as *jāhilī*. They prohibit adopting the features and traits of these civilisations.

The peoples of the lands the Arab Muslims conquered did not rebel against what the Arabs brought. Rather, they vied with each other in learning the language of the Arabs, in scholarship and in ʾIslāmic sciences, Arabic literature and history, as well as the arts of ʾIslām. They accepted Arab leadership because:

> Their relationship with this leadership was not one of the conquered with the conqueror, the ruled with the ruler, or the slave with the powerful master. Rather, it was a relationship of a religious person with another religious person, of a believer with another believer. At most it was a relationship of the follower with the followed, who surpassed him in his earlier recognition of the truth and *ʾīmān*, and by virtue of his *daʿwah* and sacrificing himself for it. There was therefore no place for rebelling, no ground for complaining and no ground for dissatisfaction. The most appropriate thing to do was to acknowledge these favours, and for their tongues to express gratitude and supplicate, 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not place in our hearts any malice against the believers. Our Lord! You alone are kind, merciful' (*Sūrat al-Ḥashr*, 59: 10).

[171] *Sūrat al-ʾIsrāʾ* mentions the *Miʿrāj* (ascension) and indicates that Muḥammad ﷺ is the Prophet of *Qiblatayn* (Jerusalem and Makkah), inheritor of the Prophets ﷺ before him. As the Seal of the Prophets, he is also the leader of all the generations of mankind after him.

That is just how it was, the conquered nations considered the Arabs to be their saviours from *jāhiliyyah* and paganism, who called them towards the abode of peace, who steered them towards Paradise, who taught them civilisation and were their teachers of literature.

This is the world leadership for which the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ paved the way and which *Sūrat al-ʾIsrāʾ* announced. It is the leadership to which the Arabs will most ardently aspire, hold on to firmly, and strive towards with all their talents, and which fathers and sons will have to bequeath to each other. It is not permissible for them, neither rationally, religiously, nor from honour, to divest themselves of it at any time. It is this leadership which will recompense them with the leadership of other nations and lands. There is no recompense or sufficiency in any other leadership. It is the only leadership which encompasses all other types of leadership and rule. It controls the hearts and spirits of nations more than it controls their mere bodies and forms.

The way to this leadership is paved and made easy for the Arabs. It is the leadership which they experienced during their first era: devotion to ʾIslāmic *daʿwah*, embracing it, adopting it and sacrificing oneself for it. And giving preference to the ʾIslāmic way of life over all other ways of life.

In this way, the ʾIslāmic nations in different parts of the world will submit to them and devote themselves to loving, respecting and emulating them; without them having the intention of acquiring this leadership. In this way, new doors and new fields will be opened to them in the east and west, the very domains which rebelled and revolted against the Western conquerors and colonialists. New nations will enter into ʾIslām, nations which are still young in their talents, strengths and treasures, nations which are able to oppose Europe in their civilisation and sciences. This is only possible if they find new *ʾīmān*, a new religion, a new spirit and a new message.[172]

The Four Pillars in the Light of the Qurʾān and Sunnah: A Comparison with Other Religions

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan felt the need for writing a book to counter the tendency in contemporary accounts of *Ṣalāh*, *Zakāh*, *Ṣiyām* and *Ḥajj* to encourage practice on the basis of utilitarian arguments. Perhaps the authors of such arguments sought to exploit rather than appease the Western preference, which enjoys influence and vogue among Muslims, for explaining everything in terms of material cause and effect. Thus, *ṣalāh* might be praised as a means of expressing solidarity with other Muslims; or as the minimum of regular movements needed to keep the body flexible; or, in its prerequisite of cleanliness, as a regime of good hygiene. Similarly, *zakāh* might be praised as a means of alleviating poverty or redistributing wealth. Such arguments are gravely misleading. They forget that the alleged benefits in social, medical, economic, political, psychological, or other such terms, could also be obtained

[172] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn* (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-ʿĀlam li al-Kitāb al-ʾIslāmī, 4th edn. n.d.), pp. 295-98.

by means other than the religious practices enjoined upon Muslims. Much more important arguments of that sort neglect the fact that these are, precisely, and primarily, *religious* practices, whose function is to bring the worshipper into relation with his Lord, and to strengthen and deepen that relation.

That is the central focus of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's book, not the juridical detail of the *ʿIbādāh*, together with a comparison between ʾIslām and other religions in this regard. That comparison is needed:

> Because a Muslim cannot value the bounty of ʾIslām and whatever God blessed him with through this perfect and eternal religion […] and he cannot fulfil the gratitude due unless he compares these acts of worship in ʾIslām with those of other religions, let alone understand the beliefs, rudiments and foundations on which the ideological and theological edifice of ʾIslām rests. It is stated that ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīn ʿUmar ﷺ said, 'There may well come a time when ʾIslām will be torn apart bit by bit. The person who grew up in ʾIslām will not recognise *jāhiliyyah*.'[173]

Understanding the duty of *ṣalāh* rests upon understanding the connection between, and the attributes of, a servant and his Lord. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan therefore explains the Divine Names, and their status in the religion and the Qurʾān. Man is a creature of complex, conflicting nature which has a *need* to worship, to be humble and submissive. To engage that nature and fulfil his need, man is presented with the most perfect examples of beauty, power, sublimity, majesty, subtlety, etc. The universe is in eternal submission and continuous worship, while man is the creature most eligible to be in a state of continuous worship. The words, postures and movements of the obligatory *ṣalāh* reflect man's stature, position and centrality in the creation, and the responsibility placed on him. They are precisely fitted to his nature, being neither too loose nor too narrow, neither too long nor too short. Shaykh Nadwī dwells on the wisdom and benefits behind the number and iteration of the obligatory *ṣalawāt*, and their following one after the other, before he explains the special merits of the optional *tahajjud ṣalāh*, the concern of past peoples to observe it, the virtue of optional *ṣalawāt* generally, and the benefits of regular, abundant worship. The spirit and injunctions of *ṣalāh* and its physical and spiritual form, are a legacy of prophethood, inherited from generation to generation within the community:

> Among the obligations of this community, especially of its *ʿulamāʾ* and spiritual guides, is that this legacy must never be severed […] no matter how much conditions change, and no matter what attacks materialism makes upon the hearts and souls. That would be an irreplaceable loss, a void that cannot be filled nor could any loss be more detrimental to the reform movement. […] The renewal of ʾIslām cannot be envisaged unless the ember of *ʾīmān* love and affection is burning in the hearts of its people and *duʿāt*; unless there returns to the ʾIslāmic community, through its *daʿwah*, training and *jihad*, a shade of the *ʾīmān* we found in the voluntary *ṣalāh* which was a feature of the early righteous centuries; unless the nation learns how to stand up before its Lord in *ṣalāh* before it learns how to stand before its enemy, and at times of problems and challenges. The ʾImām of Madīnah, Mālik ibn ʾAnas was correct when he said, 'The latter generations of the ʾIslāmic community will only gain rectitude through the things which enabled the early generations to gain rectitude.'[174] The Qurʾān says, 'The believers are indeed successful, those who are humble in their *ṣalāh*' (*Sūrat al-Muʾminūn*, 23: 1-2).[175]

In explaining the pillar of *zakāh*, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan talks about the connection between the servant and his Lord, and the love, and care shown in spending for others in preference to oneself that are incumbent upon the believer. The divine care for man, God's immeasurable beneficence that is manifested everywhere and the effect which human activity has on life and civilisation entail that no unconditional right of ownership should be recognised for man, and that all such rights are those of God alone. He explains the underlying reason for attributing some right of property to man and the benefits thereof, through Qurʾānic arguments for man's trustworthiness for stewardship, and how the early Muslims believed in those arguments and submitted to them, how willingly they fulfilled the responsibility of spending any surplus for the benefit of others.

He discusses *zakāh* as charitable spending, the need for a system of *zakāh*, a law suited to different levels of society and different times, the items on which *zakāh* is due, the wisdom in the differences in the *niṣāb* and in the places and times for distribution to its recipients. He explains those traits of *zakāh* which make it different from the diverse taxes and levies that governments or societies impose, before comparing *zakāh* with charity in other religions. He mentions the reforming role of ʾIslām in annulling class monopoly, revoking the right of religious intermediaries (rabbis and priests) to *zakāh*, and giving ownership and authority to eligible recipients.

In recounting the stand that ʾAbū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ﷺ took against those who refused to pay *zakāh*, he explains why it is necessary to preserve *zakāh*, the minimum expression of mutual care and charitable concern in the society, so that Muslims do not sink below that level but, instead, rise above it to maintain the other rights and obligations upon wealth, how it is accrued and how it is disbursed. To awaken sentiments about those further obligations, he narrates the life-style of God's Messenger ﷺ and his household, and examples from the lives of the first *Khulafāʾ*, senior Companions ﷺ and those from other eras.

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[173] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾArkān al-ʾArbaʿ* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1999), Introduction, p. 8. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā* (ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim; Riyadh, 1978), vol. 10, p. 30. Additionally, the words of ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīn ʿUmar ﷺ mean that one is unable to distinguish between *jāhiliyyah* and ʾIslām.

[174] Qāḍī ʿIyād, *al-Shifāʾ* (Damascus; Dār al-Fikr, 2002), vol. 2, pp. 98-99.

[175] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾArkān al-ʾArbaʿ*, pp. 99-100.

Finally, he contrasts continuous voluntary charity, as disposition and action and its effects on human kindness, with bureaucratically calculated welfare deductions enforced under socialist regimes. The effect of the latter is that people steadily lose the sense of personal responsibility for neighbours and their capacity for agency in responding to need. He concludes with a stirring reflection on the merit of voluntary charity:

The benefits of voluntary charity are obvious: its splendid results in comfort, tranquillity, inward contentment, mutual reliance, reciprocated love, peace, delight of the soul, satisfaction of ones conscience, pride in humanity, optimism in life, awareness of one's responsibility and duty. All these qualities have manifested themselves [...] in every society which adhered to the principle of an all-encompassing voluntary charity as opposed to limited enforced charity or rigid restrictive socialism. Members of the society have love for each other, advise each other, testify to good and purify each other. Each generation testifies to the virtue and excellence of the generation before it. Supplicating for acceptance and forgiveness in its favour, "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not place in our hearts any malice against the believers. Our Lord! You alone are kind and merciful" (*Sūrat al-Ḥashr*, 59: 10). That was the society in which each member was a mirror to his brother, he would judge him against himself, dismissing every accusation against him and absolving him of every failing. God says, "Why then, did the believing men and the believing women not think good of their own people when they heard it, and say, 'This is a clear slander'" (*Sūrat al-Nūr*, 24: 12). It is the society about which the Prophet ﷺ provided an eloquent simile, "The similitude of the believers in their love for each other, mercy towards each other and affection towards each other, is like that of the body; when a single part of the body has a complaint, the entire body responds to it with sleeplessness and fever."[176] It is the society of which a *ḥadīth* states, "The Muslim is a brother to a Muslim; he does not cheat him, nor does he lie to him, nor does he forsake him. Everything belonging to a Muslim is unlawful to another Muslim: his honour, his wealth and his life."[177] Life in many countries became a misery and a hell, "When a nation shall enter, it shall curse the other nation" (*Sūrat al-ʾAʿrāf*, 7: 38). Each time a tyrant came to power, he condemned the previous tyrant and accused him of treason and treachery; whoever assumed the reins of leadership exacted severe revenge on his enemies and rivals, persecuted, oppressed and shed blood, "When he turns away from you, he speeds through the land so that he may make mischief therein and destroy crops and lives. And God dislikes corruption" (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2: 205). Those who know nothing of the worth of charity and beneficence but the long and difficult road, and fruitless burdensome experience, are addressed thus, "Do you want to take that which is lower in exchange for that which is better? Go down to any town and you shall find what you ask for" (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2: 61).[178]

[176] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ʾAdab*, b. *Raḥmat al-Nās*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-Bir*, b. *Tarāḥum al-Muʾminīn*.
[177] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-Bir*, b. *Taḥrīm Ẓulm al-Muslim*.
[178] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾArkan al-ʾArbaʿ*, pp. 183-85.

In regards to *ṣiyām*, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan affirms that the creation of man situates him between angel and animal, the dispositions of the two being, by divine wisdom, finely compounded in man's spirit and body. Spirit and body are each drawn to their centre and peculiar characteristics. He presents the effects of the triumph of spirit or body in the life of man and in the history of religions and morals. Fasting was enjoined through the Prophets ﷺ to help mankind realise the higher objectives of life. After noting the special characteristics of fasting in ʾIslām as compared to the former religions, he explains the wisdom in limiting the hours and days of fasting and the merits of the month of Ramaḍān, and the basis of the injunctions in Qurʾānic verses. The month of fasting becomes, by virtue of the exercise of self-discipline, a time of restraining one's will in favour of God's will, a season of kindness and good-deeds. However, as Shaykh Nadwī notes, customs have overlaid and obscured this act of worship; the distortions and excesses need to be corrected by adhering to the Sharīʿah. He discusses the norms of *ʾiʿtikāf* and the blessings of worship on the Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*). He concludes:

The one who knows the circumstances of fasting in past nations and contemporary religions, who has studied their history and philosophy and witnessed the conditions of those fasting, despite their small number and variations in their requirements, compares all that with fasting in ʾIslām, its condition and system, its *fiqh* and manners; after being honoured to fast as a Muslim, he will utter praises and give thanks for the bounty of ʾIslām. He will be most worthy of saying the following while fasting, "Praise be to God who guided us to this. We would not have found the path had God not guided us. Without doubt, the Messenger of our Lord brought the truth" (*Sūrat al-ʾAʿrāf*, 7: 43).[179]

In reference to *Ḥajj*, Shaykh Nadwī begins his account of *Ḥajj* by affirming that ʾIslām is the religion of *tawḥīd* and rejects any intermediation of persons or images between the worshipper and God. Yet man needs a setting to target his yearnings, on which to focus his desire to show reverence, and by which to measure nearness. God therefore appointed certain matters, visible and tangible, named *Shaʿāʾir ʾAllāh*, which declare the majesty and glory of the Almighty. The elements of love and affection in human nature are engaged by the divine names, profusely mentioned in the Qurʾān. Likewise the Sacred House, the Kaʿbah and the *ḥajj* are there to arouse and satisfy the believer's love and affection. Just as the rites of the pilgrimage frustrate those who are worshippers of reason and material cause-and-effect, so do they console and comfort those who believe in the unseen and willingly obey the divine commands, certain of the blessing and benefit therein, albeit a blessing and benefit that may be hidden from them. At the prompting of al-Raḥmān, the Merciful, the pilgrim rises to obey and pledges thereto all his means and endeavour. Shaykh Nadwī speaks about the merits of the place and season of *ḥajj*.

[179] *Ibid*., p. 242.

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[176] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ʾAdab*, b. *Raḥmat al-Nās*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-Bir*, b. *Tarāḥum al-Muʾminīn*.
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[179] *Ibid*., p. 242.

One of its greatest objectives is to renew affiliation with the leader of the monotheists, ʾIbrāhīm ﷺ. His *daʿwah* and *jihād* marked a new departure, a clear dividing line, in the book of humanity. With the era of ʾIslām and the eternal message of Muḥammad ﷺ, the Sacred House becomes the centre of guidance, instruction, spiritual enlightenment and emotional nourishment. It is, in each year, a focus of attention for the *ʾummah*, protecting its distinctiveness and integrity, its potential and reality as an international league of humanity. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan then discusses the Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage as a resource with which to understand and communicate the meanings and merits of the ḥajj, he explains how the pilgrimage serves the cause of reform. On that point, he cites the statement of Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī:

> The Messenger ﷺ was sent to the nation of ʾIsmāʿīl ﷺ, in order to straighten its crookedness, remove its distortion and make known its light. God says, "The *millah*[180] of your father, ʾIbrāhīm" (*Sūrat al-Ḥajj*, 22: 78). Since this is the case, the fundamentals of that community have to be Muslim, and its ways (*sunan*) have to be laid down. When a Prophet is sent to a people which still has remnants of a virtuous *sunnah*, there is no need to change and alter it. In fact, it is necessary to retain it because doing so will be more likely to gain their obedience and be stronger as evidence against them.[181]

Prophethood and Prophets in the light of the Qurʾān

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan records in his autobiography how he came to deliver, at the ʾIslāmic University of Madīnah in 1962/1382 AH, the lectures that, with the addition of two others on the merit of belief in the finality of prophethood, and the divine scriptures in the scale of knowledge and history, were collected in this book on *Prophethood and Prophets*.[182] He explains in its introduction that the subject had been on his mind for some time; the misunderstandings about it were prevalent among the Muslim educated elite because of its Western modes of discourse; this issue had led many of them from the right path; it was now an issue of grave concern to him. His speeches on the subject preceded the book, and the mark of his intense *daʿwah* is felt throughout the written work. The abiding concern of all its discussions and narratives is to rouse and reinforce *ʾīmān*, and to save Muslims from the narrowness of materialistic arguments about means, causes and effects.

The book touches on a number of topics: the source of right understanding; the only way to comprehensive guidance; the marks of prophethood; the *daʿwah* of the Prophets ﷺ; the fundamental differences between Prophets and Messengers ﷺ and other types of reformers; the position (*markaz*) of

[180] *Millah* (confession) of Prophet ʾIbrāhīm ﷺ consisted of several essential aspects: *hijrah*, *jihād*, *sacrifice*, *ṣalāh*, *ṣiyām*, *ḥajj* and charity among other actions.
[181] *Ibid.*, p. 302.
[182] See ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, pp. 283-84.

prophethood and Prophets; the passing of their messages and duties to human groups; the distinguishing styles of the *daʿwah* of the Prophets as opposed to artificial styles; how the Companions ﷺ and early Arabs understood Qurʾānic terms and expressions; whether we should look at terms and expressions in the light of modern definitions; and whether we should assess the responsibility of prophethood and the *markaz* of the Prophets ﷺ by contemporary criteria. These matters are raised and dealt with in the light of the Qurʾān and examined through its magnifying glass.

Shaykh Nadwī argues that the Prophets did more than enable correct understanding of how God wanted human beings to live; they also gave people the strength to abhor evil and love good, and to strive, to wage *jihād*, through prophetic preparation. That strength so prepared is the decisive factor in all those achievements of human beings whose goodness lasts and is remembered. By contrast, the efforts of social and political reformers do not result in real change at all or in changes whose good intentions were not fully realised and did not last. Civilisation is not indebted to any people as it is indebted to the Prophets and Messengers chosen by God. It is indebted to them for the dignity human life has for its hope of rightness and justice. Without the guidance of the Prophets, the ship of humanity must flounder, along with all its sciences, its arts, its ideas and wisdom. The noble spiritual qualities, the gentle, subtle perceptions, the high-minded morals, the correct and beneficial sciences, the power to identify falsehood and then, also, to stand up against it, all these exist in the world through divine revelation and the teaching and example of the Prophets ﷺ. The world goes on taking from what they gave, walking in their light and living in the firm edifice they built.

A summary cannot really do justice to the earnest and eloquent arguments of this book. It revives confidence and faith in the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ as the guiding light to show us the safe path through our current problems and difficulties.

ʾIslām: Its traces in civilisation and its favour to humanity

This book began as an essay presented to the National Assembly for Culture, Arts and Letters of the Ministry of Information in Kuwait, on the occasion of the commemoration of the fifteenth century AH. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan then expanded it to include many aspects of the history of peoples and civilisations where ʾIslāmic influences are plain to see. He strengthens his argument with clear proofs and testimonies that turned a quickly written essay into a copious book, a serious historical study worthy of the attention of research scholars and authors, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

The book centres around ten contributions of ʾIslām to human civilisation, they are:

1. Unadulterated clear belief in the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*).

2. The principle of human unity and human equality.
3. Proclamation of the honour and pre-eminence of man.
4. Restoring respect for women, their rights and dues.
5. Combating despondency and depression with optimism, trust and confidence in the human self.
6. Combining faith with the world.
7. Reconciling antagonistic and warring parties.
8. Initiating a lasting and sacred union between religion and knowledge, binding the progress of one to the progress of the other; elevating the status of knowledge and encouraging it; applying knowledge and reason, and benefiting from reason even in religious issues; urging man to discover himself and the world around him.
9. Bringing into existence a community competent to bear the responsibility of directing the world, and overseeing the morals and the manners of individuals and communities.
10. Harmonising the belief systems and civilisations of the world. At the end Shaykh Nadwī says, "the task of influencing human civilisation has to eternally continue" and he concludes, quoting the end of *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, with the affirmation in the title, *A Prophet who is a mercy to the worlds, and a religion which is a mercy to humanity.*

The book presents an analysis of the contributions of ʾIslām to human civilisation, to show its "strong bond with the reality of life, the present and future of humanity, and also the role of the Muslim community in constructing and directing civilisation."[183] Concerning role 10 above he says:

> It is a civilisation which is immersed in the name of God, under His watchful gaze, and dyed with the dye of God. It is established on the foundation of *ʾīmān*. It is not possible to strip it of its religious mark, divine colour and faithful spirit. Any nationalistic fanaticism, *jāhilī* zeal, racist war, materialistic greed, moral licentiousness, or collective rebellion that it may undergo, is something that is foreign to it, either brought in or imported from outside, the residue of societies and environments from which the ʾIslāmic element departed, or because of the weakness, in these countries of ʾIslāmic culture, lack of occupation with the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth* and the first original sources of ʾIslām.[184]

The *sīrah* of the Prophet ﷺ

As we saw in an earlier chapter, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan had a bond with the *sīrah* of the Prophet ﷺ from very early childhood; it lasted to the end of his life and informed all his thoughts and work as a scholar and *dāʿī*, whether writing

[183] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾIslām: ʾAtharuh fī al-Ḥaḍārah* (Lucknow: Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, n.d.), p. 9.
[184] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

or speaking. The realities and ideals of ʾIslām are embodied as a whole, and in the concrete particulars are embodied the narrative of incidents and events of the Prophet's life. The study of his biography (*sīrah*) is accordingly the applied activity of explaining to oneself and others the ʾIslāmic reality in its entirety, as perfectly exemplified in his character, speech and deeds. Many aspects of the *sīrah* are found scattered in the Shaykh's writings, some of which we have already mentioned. In this section, I confine myself to introducing two of his books, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah* and *al-Ṭarīq ʾilā al-Madīnah*.

al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah: The Biography of the Prophet ﷺ

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was aware of the need for a *sīrah*, written in a contemporary style, benefiting from previous works but based on the early original sources, and in accordance with what is in the Qurʾān and authenticated Sunnah. For years he postponed tackling it on account of so many other commitments and his weakening eyesight. When God eventually gave him the courage to take up the task, he did so with an effort to combine scholarly research with the educational functions of *sīrah*. He tried therefore to include the greatest number of texts that would have an impact on the hearts and souls of Muslims. He completed writing the book at the beginning of October 1976 (Shawwāl 1396 AH).

Following an account of the *jāhiliyyah* that prevailed in the world before the advent of ʾIslām, he proceeds to present the particular form of that *jāhiliyyah* in the Arab peninsula. He explains the social, economic and moral conditions of Makkah; then of Madīnah, the nature of its land, its geography, its situation, and its economic and political conditions. In this way he was able to account for why this land and its people were chosen to be the first recipients of the message of ʾIslām. Thereafter, he recounts incidents in chronological order in a captivating literary narrative, along with scholarly notes, queries and reflections, giving special attention to the educational value of the incidents.

The book as a whole is an example of his fascination with the *sīrah*, and is filled with instances of Shaykh Nadwī's academic curiosity. The following example is from his efforts to answer the question, *Who are the ʾArīsiyyūn?*

The word ʾArīsiyyūn or Yarīsiyyūn, on the basis of varied narrations, is mentioned only in the letter written to Heraclius. This word is not mentioned in any of the letters addressed to others. The scholars of *ḥadīth* and language differ as to whom is meant by this word. The popular opinion is that the word ʾArīsiyyūn is the plural of ʾArīsī and it refers to servants, attendants and ploughmen.[185] The *Lisān*

[185] See *Sharḥ al-Nawawī li Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Ihyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 18 vols., 1972) and ʿAllāmah Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Fattanī, *Majmaʿ Biḥār al-ʾAnwār* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 5 vols., 2000).

2. The principle of human unity and human equality.
3. Proclamation of the honour and pre-eminence of man.
4. Restoring respect for women, their rights and dues.
5. Combating despondency and depression with optimism, trust and confidence in the human self.
6. Combining faith with the world.
7. Reconciling antagonistic and warring parties.
8. Initiating a lasting and sacred union between religion and knowledge, binding the progress of one to the progress of the other; elevating the status of knowledge and encouraging it; applying knowledge and reason, and benefiting from reason even in religious issues; urging man to discover himself and the world around him.
9. Bringing into existence a community competent to bear the responsibility of directing the world, and overseeing the morals and the manners of individuals and communities.
10. Harmonising the belief systems and civilisations of the world. At the end Shaykh Nadwī says, "the task of influencing human civilisation has to eternally continue" and he concludes, quoting the end of *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*, with the affirmation in the title, *A Prophet who is a mercy to the worlds, and a religion which is a mercy to humanity.*

The book presents an analysis of the contributions of ʾIslām to human civilisation, to show its "strong bond with the reality of life, the present and future of humanity, and also the role of the Muslim community in constructing and directing civilisation."[183] Concerning role 10 above he says:

> It is a civilisation which is immersed in the name of God, under His watchful gaze, and dyed with the dye of God. It is established on the foundation of *ʾīmān*. It is not possible to strip it of its religious mark, divine colour and faithful spirit. Any nationalistic fanaticism, *jāhilī* zeal, racist war, materialistic greed, moral licentiousness, or collective rebellion that it may undergo, is something that is foreign to it, either brought in or imported from outside, the residue of societies and environments from which the ʾIslāmic element departed, or because of the weakness, in these countries of ʾIslāmic culture, lack of occupation with the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth* and the first original sources of ʾIslām.[184]

The *sīrah* of the Prophet ﷺ

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al-ᶜArab of Ibn Manẓūr states, "the word *ʾarīs* means *ploughman* (*ʾakkār*). It quotes this from ʾImām Thaᶜlab. And also quotes from Ibn al-ʾAᶜrābī who said, "*ʾarisa yaʾrisu* is when a person becomes an *ʾarīs*. And *ʾarisa yuʾrisu taʾrīsan* is when a person becomes a ploughman (*ʾakkār*)." *Lisān al-ᶜArab* then quotes from ʾAbū ᶜUbaydah who said, "The best according to me is that the word *ʾarīs* refers to their senior person, whose order is carried out and whom they obey when he asks for their obedience."[186]

At this point, an intelligent reader may ask: If the word *ʾArīsiyyūn* refers to the *farmers*, then Khusro Parwez, the Persian Emperor, was more eligible of being warned against their evil befalling him, and that this word ought to have been mentioned in the letter written to him. This is because the farming class was far greater, wider and more distinguished in the Persian Sassanid Empire than it was in the Roman Byzantine Empire. Persia relied more on farmers for its income and revenue. al-ʾAzharī drew attention to this point as quoted by Ibn Manẓūr when he said, "The people of Iraq who were on the religion of Khusro were farmers and agriculturalists. On the other hand, the Romans were craftsmen. They used to refer to the Magians as '*ʾarīsiyyīn*', attributing them to *ʾarīs* which meant *ʾakkār* and the Arabs referred to them as '*fallāḥūn*' (farmers)."[187]

We therefore prefer the explanation that *ʾArīsiyyūn* refers to the followers of ʾAriyus the Egyptian (280-336 CE), who was the founder of a Christian sect which played a major role in the history of Christian beliefs and religious reform. It preoccupied the Byzantine Empire and the Christian church for a long time. ʾAriyus was the one who proclaimed the Oneness of God, distinction between the Creator and the creature, and between Father and Son, as per the Christian expression. In so doing, he prompted debate on this subject and it remained the focal preoccupation of Christian society for several centuries. His views can be summed up as follows, it is not becoming of One God to manifest Himself on earth. He therefore filled the Messiah with strength and divine speech. One of the fundamental attributes of God is oneness and eternity. He never created anyone from His being. The son is not God. Rather, he is an expression of the wisdom of the order of the Lord. His divinity is dependent and not absolute. [188]

James Mackinnon writes in his book, *From Christ to Constantine*:

"Arius insisted that God alone is primeval, eternal and infinite; naught is consubstantial with him. He it is who brought the Son into existence and, therefore, the Son is not eternal. God was not always Father; there was a time when the Son did not exist at all. The Son has an independent substance not shared by God for the Son is susceptible to change and contingencies. He cannot, therefore, be called God although he has perfection in his being. At any rate, He is a perfect being."[189]

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[186] See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ᶜArab* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaᶜah al-ʾAmīriyyah, 1885).
[187] *Ibid.*
[188] Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's note: "*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, art. *Arianism*, vol. 1, p. 777."
[189] Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's note: "James Mackinnon, *From Christ to Constantine* London, 1936. (Rendered from the Urdu translation)."

However, at the beginning of the fourth century CE the Church of Alexandria believed in the absolute divinity of Jesus without distinction between the Creator and the creature, the Father and the Son.

The head of the Egyptian church, Bishop Alexander, removed ʾAriyus from the Church of Alexandria in 321 CE. ʾAriyus left the city but the conflict did not end with his departure. The Emperor Constantine tried to terminate this conflict but he failed. He called for an assembly in Nicaea in 325 CE in which 2030 bishops assembled. The Emperor was inclined to the belief in the divinity of Jesus. He therefore passed a judgement against ʾAriyus although the majority of the attendees were in support of the latter, and only 318 bishops were against him. ʾAriyus was banished and his writings were all burned. Anyone possessing his writings was punished. However, these efforts did not diminish ʾAriyus' importance and people's devotion to him. Constantine eventually softened his approach to him and lifted the ban against his beliefs. After the death of his biggest opponent, Alexander, and the banishment of his successor, Athanasius, ʾAriyus returned to Alexandria. Constantine was on the verge of appointing him the head of the Church of Egypt and embracing his beliefs but died before he could do so.[190]

John William Draper states in his book, *History of Conflict between Religion and Science*,[191] that in the fourth century of the Christian era there were thirteen councils averse to ʾAriyus, fifteen in his favour, and seventeen semi-Arians, in all, forty-five councils were held in order to decide on this issue.

The doctrine of the Trinity was not well established in the confession or life of Christians before the fourth century. The mystery of trinitarianism was truly unravelled by the second half of the second century when Biblical theologians came to acknowledge that when "one does speak of an unqualified Trinitarianism, one has moved from the period of Christian origins to, say, the last quarter of the fourth century. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma, *One God in three persons* became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought."[192]

The belief and message of ʾAriyus continued conflicting with the call to the divinity of Jesus and his equality with one independent God. The battle between the two groups had its ups and downs. A large number of Christians in the eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire embraced this belief. Theosodus the Great held a large Christian assembly in Constantinople in which he decreed the divinity and sonship of Jesus. This decree put an end to the belief which was held by ʾAriyus. His belief was suppressed but continued to exist. A group of Christians adopted it and this group came to be known as the ʾArīsiyyah or ʾArīsiyyūn.

It is therefore understandable and more likely that the Prophet ﷺ referred to this group when he said, "If you refuse to embrace ʾIslām, the sin of the ʾArīsiyyūn shall be on your shoulders." It was this group that was adhering to the belief in the

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[190] Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's note: "*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, art. *Arianism*, vol. 1, p. 777."
[191] John William Draper, *History of Conflict between Religion and Science* London, 1910, p. 210.
[192] Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's note: "*The New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1967), art. *The Holy Trinity*, vol. 14, p. 295."

oneness of God in the Christian world which was under the auspices of the Byzantine Empire at whose head was Heraclius.[193]

Some senior ʾIslāmic scholars of the first century are also of this opinion. The book, *Mushkil al-ʾĀthār*, of ʾImām ʾAbū Jaᶜfar al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 933/321 AH), who is also the author of the famous book, *Sharḥ Maᶜānī al-ʾĀthār*, states:

> "Some scholars express the view that among the people of Heraclius, there was a group known as the ʾArīsiyyah which believed in the oneness of God, they acknowledged the servitude of Jesus to God, and did not believe in any of the Christian beliefs of divinity. It believed in his prophethood, adhered to his religion, believed in the Bible, and rejected anything else which the Christians said. If this is the case, we could refer to this group as ʾArīsiyyūn in the nominative case, and ʾArīsiyyīn in the subjective and genitive cases as stated by the scholars of *ḥadīth*."[194]

A similar statement has been made by ʾImām Muḥīy al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Nawawī (d. 1277/676 AH), the commentator of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "The second opinion is that they are Jews and Christians who are the followers of ᶜAbd ʾAllāh[195] ibn ʾArīs, with whom the ʾArūsiyyah from the Christians align themselves. Some of his statements are found in the Book of Psalms. They are referred to as ʾArīsiyyūn."[196]

al-Ṭarīq ʾilā al-Madīnah: The Road to Madīnah

The book was initially a series of talks broadcast over radio on the theme of *love for the Prophet* ﷺ, impressions about his life and personality, and a short presentation on the songs in his praise by poets from non-Arab lands. Shaykh Nadwī called the collection *The Road to Madīnah* because it paves the way to Madīnah, and evokes yearning for the city and the person who illuminated it.

The book commences with a word from the author and an introduction by Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Ṭanṭāwī. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan explains that he feared in the very lands, towards which the heart of every Muslim yearns, signs of

[193] Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's note, "Subsequent to the third edition of this book, I came across valuable research by our respected brother, Dr Muḥammad Maᶜrūf al-Dawālībi with regard to the ʾArīsiyyūn. It supports our view that when the Prophet ﷺ said, "If you refuse to embrace Islam, the sin of the ʾArīsiyyūn shall be on your shoulders", he was referring to the followers of ʾAriyus, the only Christian group that believed in the humanity of Jesus, and rejected his divinity. This valuable research is mentioned in his book, *Naẓarāt ʾIslāmiyyah*, pp. 68-83."

[194] ʾAbū Jaᶜfar al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Maᶜānī al-ʾĀthār*, vol. 3, p. 399. Additionally, nominative, subjective and genitive refer to issues related to Arabic grammar and how the case endings change the final vowel on the word.

[195] A most unlikely name for a group of Christians to have attached themselves to three hundred years before Islam.

[196] al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ al-Nawawī li Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 98.

weariness and weakening in love for the Prophet ﷺ. In this there was a great danger which opens the way to enfeeblement of faith and rebellion. Numerous factors and movements one after the other, had contributed to this weakening, if not already drying the fountains of love for God's Messenger ﷺ. The desiccation of the heart affected feelings and thoughts, crept into literature and poetry, and into religion and the manifestations of religion. Shaykh Nadwī wanted to combat this trend and to awaken the love and affection which he believed to exist in the heart of every Muslim.[197]

Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Ṭanṭāwī's introduction to the book confirms that its author succeeded in reviving that love and affection:

> If a person desires to see the house in which a litterateur was born or the land in which a poet lived, he will make preparations for a such a journey, spend money to reach there, the bitterness of fatigue will appear sweet to him, and he will consider the difficulties of the journey to be insignificant. Why then, should the heart of a Muslim not melt out of yearning for the land on whose ground Muḥammad ﷺ, the beloved of every Muslim, walked, whose air he breathed and whose water he drank?
>
> […] I was on the verge of losing confidence in myself, but when I read *The Road to Madīnah*, I felt the yearning returning and *jihād* within. I concluded that my heart is not devoid of this jewel of love. Rather, the worries of life and a lengthy separation had covered this jewel with dust. Your book removed the dust from this jewel.
>
> I almost lost my confidence in literature when I was unable to find that high melody which was sung by the poets from al-Sharīf al-Raḍī to al-Buraᶜī. When I read your book I found that it was actually poetry but written in prose.
>
> O ʾAbū al-Ḥasan! I thank you for returning my confidence and in the literature of my language.[198]

The whole book deserves to be read and re-read. I have read it several times and experienced a fresh enjoyment each time. The following quotation is from the section, *Muḥammad ʾIqbāl in the city of the Messenger* ﷺ. Shaykh Nadwī first delivered this speech over Damascus radio during his visit to the city in 1956/1375 AH.

Dr Muḥammad ʾIqbāl, the poet of ʾIslām and philosopher of today, lived his life in the love of the Prophet ﷺ and a yearning to visit his city. He spoke of this love and yearning in his timeless poetry. He had reached the end of his life and each time Madīnah was mentioned in his presence, his eyes would flow with tears. He was not destined to perform the *ḥajj* and visit the Messenger ﷺ. He had become immensely weak because of several ailments which he had been suffering for a long time. However, he travelled to Ḥijāz with his strong imagination, his sweet and fresh poetry, and his affectionate and yearning heart. He hovered in the atmosphere of Ḥijāz and spoke to the greatest Messenger ﷺ with whatever his heart, love, devotion and sincerity desired. He spoke to him for himself, his era, his people and

[197] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Ṭarīq ʾilā al-Madīnah* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1980), pp. 5-6.

[198] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

his society. The innate disposition of the poet flowed, and the meanings and realities which were consuming him, which he was controlling and was waiting for the opportunity to set free, all gushed forth. He realised that the opportunity had come and this was the time and place to give vent to all this. So he addressed himself in the lines:

"O you pigeon drinking water on the rock's edge, sing!
For you are in a place where Suʿād can see and hear you."

His poem about the Prophet ﷺ was one of his most eloquent and powerful. It was the last spark of his life and the essence of his works and experiences. It was a portrayal of his time, a statement on behalf of his people and an expression of his emotions.

Muḥammad ʾIqbāl said these lines while imagining that he is travelling to Makkah and Madīnah, the camels are moving with him, and the caravan is travelling over sand and rugged ground. But because of his intense yearning and love, it seems to him as if they were softer than silk, and that every grain of sand was a pulsating heart. He therefore asks the camel driver to slow down, and to show mercy to these trembling hearts. But the camel driver does not understand him and he urges the camels to move even faster. He becomes ecstatic, his poetic sentiment is spurred, and his lyre flows with a fine and eloquent poem.

He then experiences the good fortune of standing before the Messenger ﷺ. He sends salutations and peace to him with as much as God enables him to send. He takes the opportunity to talk about himself, his land, the period of time in which he is living, about his people, about the challenges and problems which they are facing, the effects of time, events and incidents, the effects of Western civilisation and materialistic philosophy, what his community did with the message and the trust which it was given, and how far it is from its past and its salient traits. He laments over it at times and cries, while at other times he complains and castigates it. He complains about feeling like a stranger in his own land, and feels solitary despite living in society. He talks about how his message has been lost to his people. He named this collection, *Hadiyyat al-Ḥijāz* (The Gift of Ḥijāz), as though it was a gift which he carried from Ḥijāz to his friends and students. There is no doubt that it is a blessed gift to the ʾIslāmic world and a fragrant breeze from Ḥijāz.

The poet undertook this journey of love when he was in his sixties and had become weak. It is an age when people prefer resting and staying in the same place not travelling around. What is it with him that he is travelling when he is so old? When sickness and old age have enfeebled him? A journey to Ḥijāz is both difficult and tiresome. The doctors and his close associates have advised him to rest and take ease. But he is disobeying them and obeying the orders of love and harkening to the call of yearning. He says, "I turned to Madīnah despite my greyness and old age so that I may sing and compose songs of happiness and affection. There is nothing astonishing about this because a bird flies in the desert for the entire day. When the day ends and night approaches, it flaps its wings and heads towards its nest to take refuge and spend the night there."

He seems to be saying, "Why are you astonished at my intention to go to Madīnah, which is the nest of the soul like that of the bird and the refuge of the believer, towards the end of my life and at a time when the sun of my life is on the verge of setting, have you not seen a bird hurrying towards its nest when night falls?"

Muḥammad ʾIqbāl commenced his journey when he was a sick old man, and the camel took him from Makkah to Madīnah swiftly. So he said to it, "Slow down, my beloved! Because the one who is riding you is fatigued, sick and old." And so it walked enraptured and elated, as though the desert was silk beneath its feet.

Muḥammad ʾIqbāl traverses this distance happily and eagerly until he reaches Madīnah. He says to his companion, "Come, my friend, let's cry out of joy and talk for a while. We shall give free vent to our soul because we have an appointment with the beloved who gave us the opportunity of meeting him after this lengthy separation and intense yearning."

He then turns to himself and is surprised at how he has been given this wonderful opportunity from among all his contemporaries. He then says, "There is nothing to be surprised at, the true ardent lovers are more honoured here than the sages and philosophers. What a wonderful opportunity and what a beautiful scene! An utterly destitute slave has been given the opportunity to go before the kings and rulers."

While Muḥammad ʾIqbāl is engulfed in this happiness and joy, he does not forget about his Muslim community and the Indian Muslim people. He remembers their pains and hopes, and mentions it all with the eloquence of a poet and honesty of a guide, and how beautiful it is when these two meet! He says, "O Messenger of God! This unfortunate Muslim who still has some pride, severity of kings and honour of his forefathers, has lost the anxiety of the heart and the elixir of love. His heart is sorrowful and broken, but he does not know the hidden reason for this."

"O Messenger of God! What can I tell you of his pains and aches! Suffice to say that he fell from a lofty peak. He fell from that lofty position which you had conveyed him to. The higher the place from which he falls, the greater the pain and shock. We need the affection of God for this broken and fallen Muslim community which fell from the pedestal of glory."

"He is still searching for it and his caravan is still lost in the desert, far away from his goal and destination. This community has suffered enough. It is overcome by revolt and rebellion, and it is living without a leader."

"His sheath is as empty as its case. He is thus the most poverty stricken. He has placed the Book with which he conquered the world in his desolate house, on a shelf which is covered with layers of dust and over which the spider has woven its web."

"Despite his lengthy affiliation with struggles and acts of bravery, he does not understand the language of the struggling heroes, and the awe of the brave *mujāhidūn*. He is now composing songs and living between sighs and moans."

"His eye has lost its lustre, his heart is deprived of joy. His calamity is that he is living but does not know the joy of communion and presence."

He complains about his time and society with much sorrow and pain, he says, "I am burning with the fire of my yearning and love. I am astonished that I have been created in an era that does not know devotion, which knows nothing but matter and motive, an era which does not know the anxiety of the heart, and has not tasted the joy of love. I am a stranger in the east and the west, I am living and singing alone. I talk to myself to lighten my worries and pains."

He ends his composition with a few lines which he addresses to ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Saʿūd, as he was the king of Ḥijāz at the time, yet it is a speech addressed to all the kings, leaders and rulers of Arabia. He warns the king against seeking assistance from foreigners and the European nations. He asks him to place his trust in God and

his society. The innate disposition of the poet flowed, and the meanings and realities which were consuming him, which he was controlling and was waiting for the opportunity to set free, all gushed forth. He realised that the opportunity had come and this was the time and place to give vent to all this. So he addressed himself in the lines:

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His poem about the Prophet ﷺ was one of his most eloquent and powerful. It was the last spark of his life and the essence of his works and experiences. It was a portrayal of his time, a statement on behalf of his people and an expression of his emotions.

Muḥammad ʾIqbāl said these lines while imagining that he is travelling to Makkah and Madīnah, the camels are moving with him, and the caravan is travelling over sand and rugged ground. But because of his intense yearning and love, it seems to him as if they were softer than silk, and that every grain of sand was a pulsating heart. He therefore asks the camel driver to slow down, and to show mercy to these trembling hearts. But the camel driver does not understand him and he urges the camels to move even faster. He becomes ecstatic, his poetic sentiment is spurred, and his lyre flows with a fine and eloquent poem.

He then experiences the good fortune of standing before the Messenger ﷺ. He sends salutations and peace to him with as much as God enables him to send. He takes the opportunity to talk about himself, his land, the period of time in which he is living, about his people, about the challenges and problems which they are facing, the effects of time, events and incidents, the effects of Western civilisation and materialistic philosophy, what his community did with the message and the trust which it was given, and how far it is from its past and its salient traits. He laments over it at times and cries, while at other times he complains and castigates it. He complains about feeling like a stranger in his own land, and feels solitary despite living in society. He talks about how his message has been lost to his people. He named this collection, *Hadiyyat al-Ḥijāz* (The Gift of Ḥijāz), as though it was a gift which he carried from Ḥijāz to his friends and students. There is no doubt that it is a blessed gift to the ʾIslāmic world and a fragrant breeze from Ḥijāz.

The poet undertook this journey of love when he was in his sixties and had become weak. It is an age when people prefer resting and staying in the same place not travelling around. What is it with him that he is travelling when he is so old? When sickness and old age have enfeebled him? A journey to Ḥijāz is both difficult and tiresome. The doctors and his close associates have advised him to rest and take ease. But he is disobeying them and obeying the orders of love and harkening to the call of yearning. He says, "I turned to Madīnah despite my greyness and old age so that I may sing and compose songs of happiness and affection. There is nothing astonishing about this because a bird flies in the desert for the entire day. When the day ends and night approaches, it flaps its wings and heads towards its nest to take refuge and spend the night there."

He seems to be saying, "Why are you astonished at my intention to go to Madīnah, which is the nest of the soul like that of the bird and the refuge of the believer, towards the end of my life and at a time when the sun of my life is on the verge of setting, have you not seen a bird hurrying towards its nest when night falls?"

Muḥammad ʾIqbāl commenced his journey when he was a sick old man, and the camel took him from Makkah to Madīnah swiftly. So he said to it, "Slow down, my beloved! Because the one who is riding you is fatigued, sick and old." And so it walked enraptured and elated, as though the desert was silk beneath its feet.

Muḥammad ʾIqbāl traverses this distance happily and eagerly until he reaches Madīnah. He says to his companion, "Come, my friend, let's cry out of joy and talk for a while. We shall give free vent to our soul because we have an appointment with the beloved who gave us the opportunity of meeting him after this lengthy separation and intense yearning."

He then turns to himself and is surprised at how he has been given this wonderful opportunity from among all his contemporaries. He then says, "There is nothing to be surprised at, the true ardent lovers are more honoured here than the sages and philosophers. What a wonderful opportunity and what a beautiful scene! An utterly destitute slave has been given the opportunity to go before the kings and rulers."

While Muḥammad ʾIqbāl is engulfed in this happiness and joy, he does not forget about his Muslim community and the Indian Muslim people. He remembers their pains and hopes, and mentions it all with the eloquence of a poet and honesty of a guide, and how beautiful it is when these two meet! He says, "O Messenger of God! This unfortunate Muslim who still has some pride, severity of kings and honour of his forefathers, has lost the anxiety of the heart and the elixir of love. His heart is sorrowful and broken, but he does not know the hidden reason for this."

"O Messenger of God! What can I tell you of his pains and aches! Suffice to say that he fell from a lofty peak. He fell from that lofty position which you had conveyed him to. The higher the place from which he falls, the greater the pain and shock. We need the affection of God for this broken and fallen Muslim community which fell from the pedestal of glory."

"He is still searching for it and his caravan is still lost in the desert, far away from his goal and destination. This community has suffered enough. It is overcome by revolt and rebellion, and it is living without a leader."

"His sheath is as empty as its case. He is thus the most poverty stricken. He has placed the Book with which he conquered the world in his desolate house, on a shelf which is covered with layers of dust and over which the spider has woven its web."

"Despite his lengthy affiliation with struggles and acts of bravery, he does not understand the language of the struggling heroes, and the awe of the brave *mujāhidūn*. He is now composing songs and living between sighs and moans."

"His eye has lost its lustre, his heart is deprived of joy. His calamity is that he is living but does not know the joy of communion and presence."

He complains about his time and society with much sorrow and pain, he says, "I am burning with the fire of my yearning and love. I am astonished that I have been created in an era that does not know devotion, which knows nothing but matter and motive, an era which does not know the anxiety of the heart, and has not tasted the joy of love. I am a stranger in the east and the west, I am living and singing alone. I talk to myself to lighten my worries and pains."

He ends his composition with a few lines which he addresses to ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Saʿūd, as he was the king of Ḥijāz at the time, yet it is a speech addressed to all the kings, leaders and rulers of Arabia. He warns the king against seeking assistance from foreigners and the European nations. He asks him to place his trust in God and

then on his own resources, he says, "You may pitch your tent wherever you like in the desert. But let your tent be standing on your own pillars and pegs. Do not forget that it is forbidden to borrow pegs from foreigners."

History and biographies

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's special talent for the writing of history was placed at the service of his commitment to *daʿwah*. The subjects of his biographies are presented, according to their time and place, as people worthy of study and, in our time, as worthy of emulation. He excelled in this art and fully understood the difficulties and responsibilities of it. He thought many failed at it because they did not appreciate its difficulties and did not really study their subject; so they produced repetitive portraits, sometimes indistinguishable from one another due to being insufficiently concerned with knowing and presenting the subject's character and achievement with any specificity or accuracy. He identifies as essential qualities for writing a biography: careful, critical acquaintance with the subject, either through personal contact or through reliable studies and reports about them; a connection with the subject so that the biographer has a sufficient and positive noble motive for writing about the topic; ability to express oneself lucidly, effectively and appropriately, using fitting words, without exaggeration, an ill-fitting description being a crime against the subject; understanding the core values and interests of the subject is very difficult in cases where subjects have worked or excelled in many different fields and it entails studying the subject's works in their totality and ascertaining the views of their peers among their contemporaries.[199] Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was particularly impressed with the method and literary skills of Ibn Khallikān in writing biographies:

> ʿAllāmah Shams al-Dīn ʾAḥmad ibn Khallikān (d. 1282/680 AH) distinguished himself in this regard in his book, *Wafayāt al-ʾAʿyān wa ʾAnbāʾ ʾAbnāʾ al-Zamān*, from other biographers. When he describes anyone as the grammarian, the jurist, the litterateur, the exegete, the linguist or the preacher, it would be difficult to remove that figure from that central and particular characterisation to some other category. This feat was rarely achieved by other biographers. It is only a person who has proficiency in the field of biography and whom God blesses with astuteness in passing judgement, fine perception, good taste, and wide intricate knowledge, who can achieve this.[200]

I will now present a brief overview of Shaykh Nadwī's most famous biographical studies: *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwah fī al-ʾIslām*, *al-Murtaḍā*, *ʾIdhā Habbat Rīḥ al-ʾĪmān*, *al-Muslimūn wa Qaḍiyyah Filasṭīn* and finally *al-Muslimūn fī al-Hind*.

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[199] See ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 3-6.
[200] *Ibid*., p. 6.

Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwah fī al-ʾIslām: Saviours of the ʾIslāmic Spirit

This four-volume book began as a series of lectures delivered at the University of Damascus in 1955/1374 AH on the theme of reform and revival. They serve as an introduction to the major figures of *Daʿwah* and *Jihād* in the history of ʾIslām.

The first lecture, a prelude to the book, speaks of the need for reform and revival, and their connection in the history of ʾIslām:

> One of the first realities of life is in motion and development. It is always in its youth and constantly growing. It moves from one stage to the next and changes from one colour to another. It does not know whether it is to run or to stand still. It is not afflicted by senility and paralysis. […] Religion does not lag behind from the caravan of life, it is not incapable of travelling with it and accompanying it, its stride is no shorter than the stride of life, and its energy and vitality do not become exhausted.
>
> This is the case with ʾIslām. Although it is established on firm beliefs and eternal realities, it is flowing with life and filled with energy. It has a fountain of life which never stops gushing, and matter which never finishes, good for every time and clime. For every new stage of life, for every new generation of humanity, for every new era of history, and for every contemporary society of humanity, it has resources which are never insufficient and which are never delayed from their time.

In contrast to other religions, the history of reform and revival in ʾIslām is uninterrupted:

> One who follows this history will not find any void or gap in the efforts of reform and revival. Nor will he find any period of time in which there was no one combating the deviated course, struggling against all-inclusive corruption, raising the voice of truth, challenging the oppressive forces or corrupt elements, and opening new windows to intellectual thinking.

It is an error of the narrow-minded that they have a preconceived image of what a reformer must be like and, not finding that image, they moan, complain and reject:

> Time and environment are two important factors in the life of men. Every era has its own problems, issues, conditions and impediments which challenge the field of activity, demanding a particular methodology to the exclusion of another, a particular style to the exclusion of another, but the objective is the same.
>
> Therefore we cannot transfer a person out of his era and bring him to ours, and apply to him the criteria of today, and then pass the judgement of failure, wavering, weakness and incapability on him. They rob him of his personal merits and deprive him of every feat and achievement because he did not fulfil one of their own pre-requisites, he was not one of the perfect examples of the current required reform and revival.[201]

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[201] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwah fī al-ʾIslām*, vol. 1, pp. 89-106.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's lectures had a very positive impact. ʾUstādh Muṣṭafā al-Sibāʿī, who wrote the introduction to the book, says:

> I saw the deep impact these lectures had made on the people who heard them, namely academic figures, students of the College of Sharīʿah and other students of the University. In like manner, I heard much praise for these lectures among academic and reformist circles.
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> […] I then had the opportunity of reading them before they could be sent to the printers. I benefited tremendously from them. I supplicated to God to give ʾUstādh Nadwī a long life so that he might complete this valuable work which he started, until he conveys to us something about the reformers of the present era, especially in India about whose ʾIslāmic reformers we know very little. This is a trust that can only be fulfilled by ʾUstādh Nadwī.[202]

It is not practicable to do more than give a taste of Shaykh Nadwī's style and choice of theme and emphasis in the studies that make up the four volumes of *Saviours of the ʾIslāmic Spirit*. The first is a study of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, ʾAbū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī, ʾAbū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī:

ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz

What distinguished ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's abstinence and asceticism from that of others was the degree of his *zuhud* from the desires of this life, which he was able to sustain because "He led this abstinent life solely out of fear of God, yearning for Paradise, and giving preference to the hereafter over this world."[203]

al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī

He would speak out against inclining towards the world and being engrossed in vain desires because this sickness had spread. […] He used to remind others about death and the imminence of the hereafter. People of opulence habitually pretend to forget about this and justify themselves with false hopes and pleasing fantasies. […] He was therefore in constant conflict with *jāhiliyyah*. And *jāhiliyyah* is something that only yields to the one who struggles against it. It only acknowledges the existence of the one who wages war against it […] al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was that man. His impact was phenomenal. There were many who repented, abstained from sins and the *jāhilī* life which they were living. The caravan of reform moved on, strong and effective.[204]

ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal

The secret behind ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's greatness was […] that he stood as an impenetrable barrier when the *ʾUmmah* was heading towards a reckless philosophical idea. Had this philosophy gained control over this ʾIslāmic community, its connection with the first foundations of ʾIslām and the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ would

[202] *Ibid.*, Introduction by Dr Muṣṭafā al-Sabāʾī, p. 80.
[203] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[204] *Ibid.*, pp. 152-53.

gradually have become severed. The *ʾUmmah* would have submitted to all sorts of philosophies and become a target of conjecture and deductions. The government would have gained victory over the people, politics would have achieved a permanent victory over religion, and the freedom of opinion and beliefs would have been snatched away.

There is no doubt that this would have been a heavy loss and a mighty tribulation in ʾIslām. ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal put an end to this philosophy in its early stages, while it was still on the rise. He safeguarded this religion from allowing fools to play around with it, and authority and vain opinions from gaining control over it. He safeguarded this ʾIslāmic community from falling into the lap of young, rebellious, irresponsible kings and their lackeys who would impose ideologies upon it just as they impose taxes, and herd it towards their vain desires as they herd sheep and cattle. He returned to the ʾIslāmic ideology its honour and originality, and to the *ʾummah* its freedom and identity. He thus deserved the appreciation of humanity and praise of the Muslims, acknowledgement of the forthcoming generations, and the respect and tribute of history. He was from among the senior revivers in ʾIslām.[205]

ʾAbū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī

His genius was that he established academic and theological argument and evidence for the beliefs of the ʾAhl al-Sunnah. He debated the Muʿtazilah and pseudo-philosophers on one issue of belief after another. He did all this in a language which they understood and a style which they liked and held in high regard. In so doing, he proved that this religion and its clear belief-system are both supported by the intellect, and that a truthful intellect supports a clear religion; there is no conflict and no dichotomy between the two.[206]

ʾImām al-Ghazzālī

Al-Ghazzālī was undoubtedly from among the outstanding men of ʾIslām, its great intellects, and from among the leaders of ʾIslāmic thought, reform and revival, who made a major contribution to instilling religious spirit, awakening ʾIslāmic thought, calling to ʾIslāmic fundamentals and morals, and combating intellectual assaults that were crippling ʾIslāmic society and ʾIslāmic thought. No matter what is said about al-Ghazzālī, his sincerity is beyond doubt.[207]

ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī

There arose in Baghdad, the abode of peace and heart of the ʾIslāmic world, a man of strong personality, strong faith, strong *daʿwah* and strong impact. He renewed the call to *ʾīmān* and true ʾIslām, absolute devotion and the character of sincere believers. He fought the hypocrisy in ʾIslāmic society with a strength unparalleled in the history of reform and revival. He opened the door of *bayʿah* (pledging allegiance) and repentance to all who knocked on it. Muslims from all parts of the ʾIslāmic world entered through it, renewing their promise and covenant with God, pledging not to commit polytheism and unbelief, not to commit iniquity and innovation, not to

[205] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.
[206] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[207] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

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[205] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.
[206] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[207] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

oppress, not to make lawful what God prohibited, not to abandon what God made obligatory, not to plunge headlong toward the world, and not to forget the hereafter.[208]

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī

A defiant intellectual storm blew in the seventh century. It was started by scholastic theology (*ʿIlm al-Kalām*), which was the main preoccupation of scholars in the latter centuries. This storm was rebellious and intense. The embers of the heart were extinguished by it. If there were any embers of love and affection, they were hidden in the ash, powerless to do anything. […] It was in this silent and subdued atmosphere that Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī called out towards life and affection, until the ʾIslāmic world got up from its deep sleep and life crept into it.[209]

These figures whom Shaykh Nadwī chose differed greatly in the task of reform and revival they performed. ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was the fifth of the *al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn*. He renewed the pillars and symbols of the religion in all aspects. The *ʿulamāʾ* do not differ as to his status and rank. In fact, they hold that he was the one intended by the *ḥadīth* that refers to renewal each century.[210] He is followed by ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. As for ʾAbū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī, his efforts were confined to a particular, narrow field. Although the work of al-Ghazzālī touched many different fields of reform, his relative neglect of the science of *ḥadīth* and *sunan* of the Prophet ﷺ harmed his efforts. Many weak, even unknown and fabricated, *ʾaḥādīth* spread in the community through his writings, especially the renowned *ʾIḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*.

The *Mathnawī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Rūmī (1207-73/603-71 AH) played a major role igniting the embers of love, impressing hearts, arousing souls, and bringing about a change in individuals and societies, especially in non-Arab lands, to the extent that one poet called it the Qurʾān in Persian.[211] That is a figurative expression, of course, but it transgresses the boundaries of propriety, and is perhaps indicative of the departure from ʾIslāmic values that an undisciplined response to the *Mathnawī* can lead to. God has indicated a measure for all things, including ecstatic speech of the heart that loves Him. The fact of the matter is that the *Mathnawī*, like the *ʾIḥyāʾ* of al-Ghazzāli in its influence and popularity, is akin to its popularising *ʾaḥādīth* that are weak, unknown and fabricated, as well as fabricated stories and tales. The *ʾIḥyāʾ* was verified by ʾImām Zayn al-Dīn ʾAbū al-Faḍl ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-ʿIrāqī, who went through it identifying the quality of the *ʾaḥādīth*, so that readers were then better able to understand the book's arguments and

[208] *Ibid*., p. 349.
[209] *Ibid*., p. 425.
[210] ʾAbū Hurayrah narrated that Prophet ﷺ said, "At the head of every century, Allah will send one who will renew for it the issues of its religion." *Sunan ʾAbī Dāwūd, k. al-Malāḥim*.
[211] Stated by Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414-92/816-97 AH), who was a reknowned Ṣūfī poet.

appeals. However, since no one has as yet verified the *Mathnawī*, its *ʾaḥādīth* and stories continue to circulate. Many *ʿulamāʾ* quote from it in their discourses without realising the weakness of the *ʾaḥādīth* in it and without cautioning people about that.

Some contemporaries of al-Rūmī criticised him for the stories in the *Mathnawī*. He said his concern was with their meaning and effect, not their authenticity. However, such an excuse is not acceptable; the stories and traditions of the *Mathnawī* have now acquired the status of authenticity among the intelligentsia and masses alike.

Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ibn Taymiyyah

Shaykh al-ʾIslām Ibn Taymiyyah is the subject of the entire second volume. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan wrote it in Urdu and later translated it into Arabic. He reviewed this prolific and wide-ranging scholar's service to ʾIslām in five areas:

1. Reviving belief in the Oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), and invalidating polytheistic beliefs and customs.
2. Criticising philosophy, logic and scholastic theology.
3. According preference to the methodology and system of the Qurʾān and Sunnah over every other methodology and system.
4. Refuting un-ʾIslāmic sects and religions, combating their beliefs, customs and influence.
5. Reviving the sciences of the Sharīʿah and awakening ʾIslāmic thought.

ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-ʾAḥad Sirhindī

The third volume is devoted to ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-ʾAḥad Sirhindī (1563-1624/970-1033 AH). Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan says that Sirhindī saw, in the light of his experience and knowledge, three options in how to deal with the agnosticism that pervaded the court of the Mughal Emperor, ʾAkbar; withdraw from public life into the seclusion of a *khānqah*; go on the offensive, that is, directly challenge the state's authority and power; or establish a network of contacts in the outer circles of the court and, through them, strive to influence government and administration in the right direction, perhaps even the emperor himself. He chose the third option and had considerable impact through his correspondence among the political elite, kindling ʾIslāmic sentiment in their hearts and improving the fulfilment of their ʾIslāmic duties.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan considered the example of ʾImām Sirhindī to be especially relevant for the present era. His life records the accomplishments of a righteous and sincere servant of God, realised through the virtues of steadfastness, forbearance, humility and submission. The major changes that Muslims have witnessed in contemporary times can be best dealt with through the cultivation of those same virtues, not thoughtless belligerence.

IV. His Writings

Shaykh Nadwī, like other *ʿulamāʾ* in India, addresses ʾImām Sirhindī with the title, *Mujaddid ʾAlf Thānī,* renewer of the second millennium. The use of such a title is especially regrettable in that ʾImām Sirhindī stood against the notion of the *second millennium*, which ʾAkbar exploited, as Shaykh Nadwī himself explains, "The second step was the emperor's ascent to the level of absolute *mujtahid* and the only one to be obeyed because a thousand years had passed since the dawn of ʾIslām and the second millennium was beginning. The world was starting a new era, […] it therefore had to have a new religion, a new law, a new law-giver, and a new ruler."[212] The well-known Prophetic *ḥadīth* speaks of a renewer for every *century*, not millennium. ʾImām Sirhindī, the *mujaddid* of the eleventh century was followed in the next century and in the same region by another *mujaddid*, namely ʾImām Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī, who indeed surpassed him in many scholarly and practical achievements and in the impact of his reform and revival movement.

ʾImām Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī

ʾImām Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī (1704-62/1115-75 AH) is the subject of Shaykh Nadwī's fourth volume. He said of this volume, on one occasion, that it was the best book he had written.[213] In it he presents the life and work of ʾImām Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī in seven areas:

1. Reform of beliefs and a call to the Qurʾān.
2. Spreading *ḥadīth*, and striving to make *fiqh* conform with *ḥadīth*.
3. Presenting the ʾIslāmic Sharīʿah in a systematic manner, supported by arguments and textual evidence; expounding the objectives and wisdom behind the injunctions of the Sharīʿah.
4. Explaining the status and role of the *Khilāfah*, the distinguishing attributes *al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah*, affirming it with proofs, and refuting the contentions of the Shīʿah.
5. His leading role as a reformer during the political turmoil that accompanied the decay and disintegration of the Mughal empire.
6. Addressing the call to reform of different levels within the Muslim community.

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[212] *Ibid*., vol. 3, p. 123.

[213] As a student at Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, I translated the *Dānishmandī* of Imām Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī from Persian to Arabic. It was published in Nadwah's *al-Baʿth al-ʾIslāmī*, under the title *Mabādiʾ al-Dirāsah wa al-Taʿlīm*. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan saw it; at the time he was writing the fourth volume of *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwah fī al-ʾIslām*. I was summoned to where he was working on the manuscript, the Shiblī Nuʿmānī Library. There I was pleased to hear from his lips that he had made reference to me in one of his most well received books and proceeded to read out from his manuscript the passage in which my name is mentioned. For sure it was intended as an encouragement to my scholarly aspirations, and so it was; may God reward all his good intentions and deeds.

7. Training *ʿulamāʾ* who possessed resolve and perseverance, and sending them to invite Muslims to self-reform, to spread the correct religion, and convey it to the succeeding generations.

Al-Murtaḍā

This is a detailed biography of ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ﷺ. Good biographies on the first three *Khulafāʾ* were already available in Urdu, *al-Fārūq* by ʿAllāmah Shiblī Nuʿmānī, *al-Ṣiddīq* by ʾAmīr Ḥabir al-Raḥmān Khān al-Sharwānī and *Dhū al-Nūrayn* by ʾUstādh Saʿīd ʾAḥmad ʾAkbarābādī. There was a great need for an objective scholarly study on ʿAlī ﷺ, especially in light of all the controversies surrounding him among different schools and factions, doctrinal and political. *Al-Murtaḍā* was eventually published on 31st May 1988 (14th Shawwāl 1408 AH). It enjoyed great popularity and was translated into Urdu, Persian, Turkish, English and Indonesian.

The book draws on a vast range of primary and secondary sources, and covers every aspect of the life of ʿAlī ﷺ, from his childhood during the *jāhiliyyah*, to his youth and middle age in ʾIslām, from his companionship of the Prophet ﷺ to his faithful and sincere fellowship with the *Khulafāʾ* who preceded him.

> The figure of ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ﷺ is one of those wronged and oppressed by history. […] His person was not accorded true justice, not presented to scholars and researchers, even those who loved and honoured him, in its true image and comprehensive form. It was not set in an honest and objective way in the era in which he distinguished himself, the events that he experienced, the society, people and leaders who co-operated with him, the difficulties and hardships that he faced, the values and principles that he firmly adhered to, and the political and administrative measures that he adopted.[214]

Shaykh Nadwī stresses in particular that historiography about ʿAlī ﷺ did not fairly represent the actions he took against the theoretical alternatives open to him, nor did it take account of the likely consequences of the alternative courses of action had he risked taking them.

Shaykh Nadwī argues that the wisdom behind deferring the accession of ʿAlī ﷺ to the *Khilāfah* was that it separated the office of *Khalīf* from accession by right of inheritance, a practice that has vexed many societies and movements, before and since. Thereafter, he presents clear, irrefutable proofs on the serious and sincere co-operation of ʿAlī ﷺ with the *Khulafāʾ* who preceded him, in every manner that was for the good of ʾIslām and the Muslims. He then enumerates the efforts of the senior people among his family in guiding the Muslims, purifying their souls, calling to God and spreading ʾIslām in different places, and their brilliant role in leading movements of *jihād*

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These efforts were suppressed and did not produce the desired results because the government was strong and organised against them, possessing means and resources. We have seen many struggles of the past that were established on sincerity, faith, bravery and courage; their leaders and followers did not fail to sacrifice their wealth and lives. But they were often put down by organised governments, mighty armies and fearsome powers. This is neither something new in history nor astonishing in the course of this world. Nevertheless, they rendered sterling service to ᵓIslām despite their defeat in the field of political and material outcomes. This is because they upheld the honour and sanctity of the history of ᵓIslām. Were it not for these struggles and efforts from time to time, ᵓIslāmic history would have been a continuous story of egotistical personal motivations: the story of kings who ascend to power, and of the ambitious people who aspired and failed.[215]

When the winds of *ᵓīmān* blow

Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan wrote the biography of Sayyid ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜIrfān Shahīd in Urdu in two volumes. As part of his programme to inform the Arab world of the services to ᵓIslām by their fellow-Muslims in India, he turned selections from it into *ᵓIdhā Habbat Rīḥ al-ᵓĪmān*. It records the life of the leader of the greatest *daᶜwah* and *jihād* movement in the Indian subcontinent. The title is explained in Shaykh Nadwī's introduction:

When the wind of *ᵓīmān* blows, it produces miracles in beliefs, deeds and morals. People witness brilliant examples of bravery, conviction, integrity, trustworthiness, preference for others, subjugation of the self, a voluntary spirit, humility in expressions, and high aspirations. They see signs of justice, mercy, love and loyalty which they had almost forgotten and given up hope in.

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This blessed wind blew in different periods of history, for short periods at times, and lengthy periods at other times. They are well-known and recorded in the history of ᵓIslāmic propagation and ᵓIslāmic revival.

This wind blew in India at the beginning of the thirteenth century of the Hijrah. When ᵓImām Sayyid ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜIrfān Shahīd initiated his call to *tawḥīd*, revival, and *jihād*, it revived memories of the first centuries of the Hijrah.[216]

The narrative recounts episodes from the history of this *daᶜwah* and *jihād*, from the life of its leader and his companions and associates. Because the subject-matter of the book was new to readers in the Arabic-speaking world, Shaykh Nadwī's brilliant and moving presentation had a very powerful effect. The following is a selection of extracts from the section titled, *The martyrs of Bālākot speak*:

Many pure souls were martyred in the battle of Bālākot.

[...] They pledged to God that they would strive until their last breath and last moments of their lives in order to uplift His word, portray His religion, raise His flag, promulgate His Sharīᶜah, and spread His guidance and light even if the polytheists are averse to it. They fulfilled their promise to God and continued waging *jihād* with full force, zeal and desire. Nothing diminished their courage until they breathed their last, and signed the document of love and sacrifice with their generous and pure blood. And what a signature that was! The night of the 25th of Dhū al-Qaᶜdah was probably the first night in which they enjoyed a quiet sleep, liberating them from the burdens on their minds and the chains on their bodies. What a splendid liberation that was!

They returned to their Lord wearing the medals of martyrdom on their chests. He is the Lord who does not bother about the realisation of hopes, the reaching of goals and the results of toiling. He does not reprimand any for being defeated and having fallen down. He does not hold any accountable for failing to create a state, establish a rule, lay down a system and liberate the land. He looks at two things alone: *honesty* and *sincerity*, and the utilisation of one's means and expenditure of one's entire effort.

It is certain that the martyrs of Bālākot did not hold anything back in spending their lives and wealth, and utilising their means and talents with sincerity and honesty until they attained the honour of the world and the religion, and earned the acceptance of God and the Muslims.

All that blood which disappeared in the soil of Bālākot and in the presence of everyone, did not leave behind any mark or trace. That blood did not establish a state nor did it create a new nation; and it did not realise a dream, yet it was heavier, more valuable, and of a higher status in the scale of divine justice than mighty and powerful nations and vast empires.

These poor *mujāhidūn* sacrificed their souls in a strange place far away from their own lands. They found neither provisions nor help. Yet they were more honourable and dignified in the sight of God than mighty and haughty kings who ruled over empires, established governments, regarding whom God said, "When you see them, their bodies please you. When they speak, you hear their speech. Yet they are like blocks of timber propped against a wall" (*Sūrat al-Munāfiqūn*, 63: 4).

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There is no doubt that the blood of the martyrs of Bālākot did not change the political and geographical map of the world. And that this thin line of blood which flowed from a small *khānqah* did not find a place in the natural atlas nor in political history. But who knows what its status is in the register of divine decree and destiny? And what its sanctity is in the sight of the Almighty God? Who knows how many marks of the dirt and disgrace of fleeing from battle, this blood washed off from the Muslims, and was the cause of certain commands being propagated and others being erased by God, "God wipes out whatever He wills and retains whatever He wills. And with Him is the original Book" (*Sūrat al-Raʿd*, 13: 39). It is therefore not far-fetched that this blood announced the fall and collapse of a powerful and obstinate empire, and decreed the victory and prosperity of a later weak nation. A star thus appeared through this blood, and another star disappeared through it. It is not far-fetched for it to perform the impossible, and falsify assumptions and estimates. All this is on the knowledge of God. It is not in the power of man merely through his reason and intelligence to investigate the effects of this blood over the course of time.

Every martyr of Bālākot is calling, "If only my people knew how my Lord forgave me, and made me of those honoured" (*Sūrah Yā Sīn*, 36: 26-27). They are saying, We waged *jihād* so that the Muslims may find a good opportunity and a right climate in which they can establish the salient aspects of the religion of God, make a true representation of ʾIslāmic life, establish His Sharīʿah, promulgate His laws and limits on His servants and in His lands, present a perfect living example of an ʾIslāmic society, through which they gain supporters and helpers for ʾIslām, and through which they establish a proof of the capability of ʾIslām. A free ʾIslāmic society which is not governed by desire, not driven by Satan, not subjugated by any ruler or king, nor dictated to by *jāhilī* customs and habits, "And authority, in its entirety, belongs to God alone" (*Sūrat al-ʾAnfāl*, 8: 39).

A society which opens its doors to obedience, worship, righteousness and piety; and shuts its doors to iniquity, immorality, disobedience and enmity, applying this verse, "Those whom, when We give them power in the land, they establish *ṣalāh*, give *zakāh*, command good and prohibit evil" (*Sūrat al-Ḥajj*, 22: 41).

God decreed for us martyrdom in His cause and acquiring His pleasure in order to realise this lofty aim, and He decreed victory and success in this world. We are pleased with the decree of God, we accept His order and we are happy with His bounty. If God gives you an opportunity to bring back an ʾIslāmic life and to establish an ʾIslāmic society at any time in history, and you find a suitable climate for the application of the ʾIslāmic Sharīʿah, and there is no intrusive government or foreign usurper, and yet you slink away from the field, stay away from this responsibility, turn back on your heels, and cast aside those prerequisites, qualities, traits and characteristics which the weak Emigrants possessed during their rise, then this would be thanklessness and ingratitude for the favours and bounties of God, breaking a pledge, and going back on one's word, such is rarely found in history.

Our blood which we generously poured in the fields of battle and sacrifice, in the battlefield of Bālākot right till the end, is signature and pledge of our *jihād* and martyrdom. This entire region is a graveyard of the martyrs. As for you, you have acquired wide and vast territories that are lush and green, through a simple effort at times, and through a mere flourish of a pen at others. Indeed, at times you inherited

mighty and revered countries, "We then made you successors in the earth after them, so that We may see what you do" (*Sūrah Yūnus*, 10: 14).

If you do not seize this wonderful opportunity, and you make this freedom and movement a vehicle of your personal motives and a means to fulfil your desires; and you do not establish the Sharīʿah of ʾIslām on yourselves, families and people; and your countries and governments become no different from foreign countries, materialistic and secular in civil life, and laws; and if your rulers are no different from these rulers in their morals, life, culture and education; then you have no excuse before the nations of the world against whom you were in conflict in the name of ʾIslām. And you will have no excuse before the all-knowing God on the day of Resurrection when you will be accountable for everything, large and small.

God gave you a golden opportunity which is rarely given, an opportunity in whose quest nights and days were spent, for which ʾIslāmic history turned thousands of pages, in whose sweet hopes and dreams countless believing pure people lived, as well as people of high aspirations, courage, self-respect and sentiment - and then departed from this world before they could realise their dreams and quench their thirst. If you waste this valuable opportunity, the opportunity of representing beautiful ʾIslāmic life in its most beautiful form, most captivating meaning and most visible shape, it would be a terrible calamity and a painful back-breaking catastrophe which crushes bones and uproots hopes from hearts and chests.

These martyrs who are sleeping a peaceful and deep sleep in a small *khānqah* in this beautiful distant village of Bālākot are speaking today to the ʾIslāmic peoples who have gained freedom, enjoyed independence and taken hold of the reins of leadership. They are crying, "If you turn away now, could it be that you will go on to spread corruption all over the land and break your ties of kinship?" (*Sūrah Muḥammad*, 47: 22).[217]

Muslims and the issue of Palestine

Since the early twentieth century, the issue of Palestine has been the dominant concern of the Arabs and Muslims. It has served as the preface and theme of every sermon and discourse, the mandate of every leader and the one topic sure to fire the hearts of people, especially the young. Much was said throughout this period but no serious effort made, no clear, powerful call to change the lifestyle of the peoples and lands being consumed by the intense onslaught of Western culture, which is without parallel in the Muslims' recent history. Nor was there any call to remove the causes of anger and failure made clear in the Qurʾān, or to earn the means to true victory which, the Qurʾān and Sunnah make clear. Nor was there any urge to refer to the Qurʾān and practise what it calls to. Nor was there a conscious and just faith, which neither denies nor is deceived by the causes of this catastrophe, and the occurrence of this major problem which the intellectuals and leaders among the Muslims have been at a loss to solve.

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[217] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *ʾIdhā Habbat Rīḥ al-ʾĪmān*, pp. 201-06.

There is no doubt that the blood of the martyrs of Bālākot did not change the political and geographical map of the world. And that this thin line of blood which flowed from a small *khānqah* did not find a place in the natural atlas nor in political history. But who knows what its status is in the register of divine decree and destiny? And what its sanctity is in the sight of the Almighty God? Who knows how many marks of the dirt and disgrace of fleeing from battle, this blood washed off from the Muslims, and was the cause of certain commands being propagated and others being erased by God, "God wipes out whatever He wills and retains whatever He wills. And with Him is the original Book" (*Sūrat al-Raᶜd*, 13: 39). It is therefore not far-fetched that this blood announced the fall and collapse of a powerful and obstinate empire, and decreed the victory and prosperity of a later weak nation. A star thus appeared through this blood, and another star disappeared through it. It is not far-fetched for it to perform the impossible, and falsify assumptions and estimates. All this is in the knowledge of God. It is not in the power of man merely through his reason and intelligence to investigate the effects of this blood over the course of time.

Every martyr of Bālākot is calling, "If only my people knew how my Lord forgave me, and made me of those honoured" (*Sūrah Yā Sīn*, 36: 26-27). They are saying, We waged *jihād* so that the Muslims may find a good opportunity and a right climate in which they can establish the salient aspects of the religion of God, make a true representation of ᵓIslāmic life, establish His Sharīᶜah, promulgate His laws and limits on His servants and in His lands, present a perfect living example of an ᵓIslāmic society, through which they gain supporters and helpers for ᵓIslām, and through which they establish a proof of the capability of ᵓIslām. A free ᵓIslāmic society which is not governed by desire, not driven by Satan, not subjugated by any ruler or king, nor dictated to by *jāhilī* customs and habits, "And authority, in its entirety, belongs to God alone" (*Sūrat al-ᵓAnfāl*, 8: 39).

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The Muslim Brotherhood under the leadership of ʾImām Shahīd Ḥassan al-Bannāʾ was the first movement in the Arab and ʾIslāmic world to recognise the danger and the immense responsibility facing it. It focused attention on this issue through *daʿwah* and *jihād* and was therefore made the target of plots and conspiracies to undermine its support and to dissipate its energies.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan had been concerned about Palestine since early youth. He later met with leaders, rulers and kings and offered his counsel. He also attended and spoke about the issue at several conferences. This book is a collection of the speeches, lectures and articles that he presented on such occasions. His thinking and argument were done in the light of the principles of the Qurʾān and Sunnah. He presented a frank picture of the reality in which the Muslim community is living, without exaggeration or embellishment, without an excess of optimism or despondency. He tried to diagnose the illnesses, and to locate the places of weakness in the Arab and ʾIslāmic societies. He says in his introduction:

The author of this book was able to thoroughly investigate this subject over several years before this calamity struck. He had expressed orally and in writing certain points that were later realised. The reason was the issue was neither obscure nor confusing. All it needed was for this region to have a taste of the Qurʾān, a little knowledge of the nature of things, and an awareness of what is happening, to then bear the responsibility of repelling this problem.

Then the major event, the calamity of June 1967 (Safar 1387 AH) actually took place and it became the subject of his thinking, investigation and writings. He wrote several articles and delivered many talks on this issue, which were later published and circulated.[218]

The book contains a clear message and a balanced comparison between profit and loss. It is a courageous call to take stock of the leaders and the masses, an exposition of the real factors behind the Palestinian calamity. It calls for the eradication of the causes of disappointment before the eradication of enmity. It calls for a complete change from a life of ease and self-indulgent opulence to one of austerity and hardship. The book was well received in Arab and ʾIslāmic circles, and enjoyed great acceptance among the *ʿulamāʾ*, *duʿāt* and reformers.

Muslims in India

During his trip to the Arab world in 1951/1370 AH, Shaykh Nadwī was repeatedly asked such rudimentary questions about Muslims in India that it seemed to him that contemporary Arabs were largely ignorant of the scale of Muslim presence in India, of its historical depth and of its reach in scholarship

[218] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Muslimūn wa Qaḍiyyah Filastīn* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), Introduction, p. 8.

and contribution to ʾIslāmic knowledge. This prompted him to write the book *al-Muslimūn fi al-Hind*. It recounts the contributions of Muslims to the wealth of India since coming to the country in the first century AH, the reforms and changes they introduced in different walks of life, the ʾIslāmic sciences they produced, the additions they made to this heritage, the senior *ʿulamāʾ* and great writers who distinguished themselves there, the academic and religious manifestations of Muslim activism, and the major ʾIslāmic centres of learning in the present age.

Another factor that prompted this book was Shaykh Nadwī's observation that many notable political and cultural figures from the ʾIslāmic world and the Middle East visit India every year, spend time in the country, then return without having made contact with India's Muslims or finding out about them, except for some few, superficial facts. They know more about the Buddhists and Jains than about the Muslims who share the same beliefs, culture and civilisation, who were the builders of modern India, and one of the strongest peoples of the world as regards literature, the arts, administration, and the scale and extent of what they left behind. And they are still an active force in the country and region.

The book's introduction, written by Shaykh ʿAlī al-Ṭanṭāwī, talks of his contact with Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ and India, and about Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's mastery of different branches of knowledge and of the Arabic language and its literature.

The book's first section, on *The role of Muslims in the civilisation of India*, recounts what the Muslims brought to these lands when they entered as *duʿāt* and guides, as *mujāhidūn*, as conquering kings and as learned scholars. It tells of the wealth of information, good qualities, and rare talents they carried with them, and their contribution to the religious, moral, intellectual, social and economic life of India.

In section two *The legacy of the ʿulamāʾ in India and their attention to the Arabic language*, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan talks about the most important and valuable books they presented to the world on different sciences and disciplines, "The Muslims in India were loyal to their country. They did not back away from serving it and taking it forward in the fields of science, manufacturing and civilisation. They were faithful to their religion and their Arabic ʾIslāmic culture. They did not lag behind in this regard nor did they sever themselves from it. In fact, we see them at the head of the caravan and holding the reins during some periods of history."[219]

He includes a section on *The distinguished personalities of the Indian people*,[220] and also discusses a wide range of topics: *The impact of the Arabic language on Indian languages*; *ʾIslāmic civilisation in India*; *The past academic*

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[220] *Ibid*., pp. 65-66.

movement in India, its centres and traits; *The impact of the Ṣūfiyyah on Indian society*; *The unique position of Muslims as a substantial population in India, part of but distinct from non-Muslims*; *The role of Muslims in the struggle for the liberation of India*; and *Problems facing the Indian Muslim population*. Two articles were later added to the book: *The identity of the ʾIslāmic population, its values and sources*; and *A population makes a covenant with God*. The latter concludes:

> We make a firm pledge in this last part of the night in which the mercy of God descends, supplications are accepted and hearts are purified, that we will live in this country with our ʾIslām and the ʾIslām of our generations to come. We will spend everything for it, valuable or not, we will bear all joys and hardships for it, and we will be one of the two groups which God mentioned, "Of the believers are many men who have been true to the covenant which they made with God; some of them have fulfilled their obligation and some of them are still waiting, without having changed their resolve in the least" (*Sūrat al-ʾAḥzāb*, 33:23).[221]

Correction of ideas and concepts

While most of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's energy and output was dedicated to teaching the fundamental truths of ʾIslām and inspiring adherence to them, he also strived against all that works against those truths. His refutations were directed against the dangerous trends in ideas and customs that threaten Muslims and the ʾIslāmic ways of life based on adherence to the Qurʾān and Sunnah.

The struggle between ʾIslāmic and Western ideology in ʾIslāmic lands[222]

The pressing issue of the age is how Muslims should deal with the civilisation and culture of the West. A culture which intrudes upon the lives of other peoples and communities whilst deeply affecting the Muslims in particular - as they bear the responsibility of *daʿwah*, direction, guidance and admonition of the world. The *ʾummah* should not be restricted to moving with the fast caravan of life alone, but it must be able to lead and steer that caravan as well. [...] Making the right diagnosis and adopting the right policies is of critical importance, especially for those ʾIslāmic nations who have won political independence, because the slightest deviation or slip-up

[221] *Ibid.*, pp. 245-46.

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> will cause the *ʾummah* to fall into a deep pit, and shift it away from its correct target by several centuries and generations."[223]

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Western onslaught against the ʾIslāmic world had acquired a seemingly irreversible momentum. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan says that ʾIslāmic societies that suffered this onslaught could have adopted three approaches, and he proceeds to examine them in detail in this book.

The first approach is wholly negative, to reject this materialistic civilisation outright, fight it or have nothing to do with it. This would entail refusing any benefit from it, even knowledge of the natural world or the tools and technologies based upon that knowledge. Shaykh Nadwī considers the natural and Sharʿī lawfulness of this approach and its consequences. He concludes that it would lead to severe regression, cut the contact of this region with the rest of the world, and leave it like a remote island, ineffective as regards the obligation of *daʿwah*. He mentions the fate of regions in the ʾIslāmic world that became cut off in this way:

> The situation in many ʾIslāmic lands was as portrayed by the great ʾIslāmic poet of Turkey, Muḥammad ʿĀkif, when he said, "People ask me, 'You were in the east for a long time. What did you witness there?' What should my reply be? I tell them, 'I saw the east from one end to the other. The only thing which I saw was desolate villages, peoples without leaders, collapsed bridges, unused rivers, and deserted streets. I saw gaunt wrinkled faces, bent backs, empty minds, motionless hearts and distorted intellects. I saw oppression and slavery, wretchedness and misery, haughtiness and abhorrent evils, widespread diseases. [...] I saw leaders having no authority, I saw brother fighting brother, I saw rivers having no shore and I saw efforts having no objective, I saw dark long nights which were never followed by bright mornings and brilliant days.[224]

The only way to repair this situation, Shaykh Nadwī argues, is:

> To face the realities with courage and knowledge, reform the conditions with sincerity and honesty, remove corruption, realise the objectives which have to be realised, establish social justice as ordered by ʾIslām and confirmed in the Qurʾān and Sunnah, make earnest effort for the prosperity of the populace, for every member of society to receive food, prohibit wastage which creates obstacles between a populace and its food and necessities, reorganise the system of education according to the ʾIslāmic ideology and message of these countries with the development of the modern era and its modern sciences. It must create faith, character, steadfastness, self-confidence, pride in one's religion, and zeal for it in the new generation. It must create in it the spirit of invention, ideological independence, self-made success, confronting the West with courage and intelligence, bringing back religious spirit, strong faith, moral consciousness, ʾIslāmic sentiment in the populace, removing despondency and

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[224] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

complaint by removing their causes and by rectifying the conditions, adopting from the West what would be beneficial to the ʾIslāmic populace and which is in accordance with its pure belief system, that which has a positive practical value, and which would strengthen and benefit the populace in the struggles of life, the struggle for glory, and inviting to God.[225]

The second approach to dealing with the West is through capitulation and emulation, to accept this civilisation as it comes, with all its beliefs, ideologies, materialistic philosophies, and economic and political systems. Shaykh Nadwī speaks of the suffering of Turkey when it rushed to implement this approach. He contrasts Ḍiyāʾ Kuk ʾAlib's explicit and forceful call for Turkey to abandon its past and adopt Western civilisation with the moderate approach of Nāmiq Kamāl, which did not have the influence held by Ḍiyāʿ Kuk ʾAlib. He presents the measures taken by Kemāl Ataturk to erase the Turkish ʾIslāmic legacy and comments "Thus, it is sad to say, that Turkey was at the head of the movement for renewal, or more correctly, renewal and Westernisation, and became the leader of modernist rulers in ʾIslāmic countries and lands. Kamāl ʾAtaturk was considered to be the icon of progress and revolution."[226]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan describes the situation in various ʾIslāmic lands at this time. In India, there was the balanced approach of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, and the critical contributions of ʾAkbar ʾAlāhabādī, Muḥammad ʾIqbāl, and the Jamāʿat ʾIslāmī. In Egypt, there existed the efforts of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-ʾAfghānī and Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh, the role of European graduates and their parroting of Orientalist philosophies, and the impact of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. In Syria and Iraq, there was the aggressively nationalistic ideology of the Baʿth party. Regarding these lands, and other newly independent countries like Iran, Indonesia, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Morocco, he stresses they are on the path of Westernisation. He criticises the political double standards of the proponents of atheism and secularism, and the excesses perpetrated against the populace by the state. He affirms that many of the failures in behaviour are attributable to the Western system of education and there is no solution other than to reform it in accordance with the beliefs of the ʾIslāmic community, its values, goals and needs.

Shaykh Nadwī then discusses the third approach to dealing with the West. He speaks about the centrality of the ʾIslāmic community in the world and its message, and its duty to see and show the potential of human life from the perspective of Believers, certain that life is a stage of transition to the hereafter. In his conclusion he explains the great void, or need of the ʾIslāmic world, namely a great mind or genius:

Who can confront Western civilisation with courage, faith and intelligence; who can cut a path through its methodologies and ideologies, through its pros and cons,

[225] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[226] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

a path that would take the ʾIslāmic world beyond emulation and imitation, beyond extremism and radicalism? Only a genius who does not submit to aesthetics, manifestations and superficial concepts. Only a person who adheres to realities, the sources of power, to the core and not the peel.

The eminent genius who cuts for himself, his country and his people an innovative path in which he combines faith, which was peculiar to the Prophets and Messengers, the religion which God conveyed to him and his people through Muḥammad ﷺ, this path includes knowledge, which is not the possession of one nation, land or era. He must take the best incentives of religion which are the greatest sources of power and the richest treasure for the service of humanity. [...] He must take from Western civilisation the many powerful tools and means which it produced, which it attained in the course of its lengthy intellectual journey and its continuous and difficult struggle; but from which the West did not benefit because of its bankruptcy in *ʾīmān* and its deprivation from these good incentives and righteous objectives. Instead, these tools have been used for the misery of humanity, the bartering away of civilisation, or for other trivial objectives of no value at all.[227]

The arguments here reviewed are also found in others of Shaykh Nadwī's works, varied to suit the occasion and context and the needs of his audience. In *Speaking to the West*, the balanced approach, succinctly phrased in the motto of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, "Combining the good of the ancient and the beneficial of the modern", is argued with a new force, clarity and wonderful civility, characteristic of Shaykh Nadwī. This book is addressed directly to those interested or engaged in *daʿwah* in the West. In the dialogue between Muslims and the West, the stance of the former should not be weak and submissive, nor should it be marked by the resentment and rebellious anger which overwhelmed the writings of the political leaders in the ʾIslāmic East at the beginning of the present century. Rather, the *dāʿī* should invite the West without any rationalisation, embarrassment or nervousness. He should be mindful of the seriousness and importance of calling humanity to the true guidance. Shaykh Nadwī also invites the attention of Westerners to the selfish pride which seals off the windows of light to them and prevents them from seeing the truth. He does so with wisdom, speaking with concern and care, cognisant of the grave consequences for his listeners of not speaking effectively.

The collection *Speaking to the West* also addresses Muslim students living in the West. It warns them of its deceptive allurements and calls on them to live in the West as *duʿāt* and leaders, not as imitators and followers, to build bridges between East and West on the basis of mutual benefit. Then, when they return to their countries, they should be even more convinced of the eternity of ʾIslām, be even more proud of it, and be even more fearful of the ruin that humanity faces if the teachings of God's Messengers ﷺ are not heeded.

The collection *Speaking Frankly in America* comprises talks delivered by Shaykh Nadwī in the USA and Canada in 1977/1397 AH at the invitation of

[227] *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17.

Muslim students. Again, his theme is restoring the confidence of the young in the message of ʾIslām, of which they are the bearers, and the need to remove feelings of intimidation and inferiority in the face of Western civilisation and its values. He explains to his young audience why and how they should protect their ʾIslāmic identity, the heavy responsibility that they carry to their non-Muslim neighbours in the West, and how to convey the essentials of an alert, strong Muslim character in the face of the atheist and materialistic attitudes prevalent all around them. He speaks about the advancement of Western and American civilisation which, nevertheless, for all the power of its economic, political and social systems is unable to solve contemporary problems and is producing ever more intractable ones. The followers of the Qurʾān and Sunnah were also led by their ideas and beliefs to a peak of culture and civilisation, and yet they did not succumb to materialism, they were able to distinguish mirage from reality, true from counterfeit, the temporary from the permanent.

The Arabs and ʾIslām

Arab nationalism is a political cause, yet it has the flavour, zeal, traits and sanctities of a religion. The Western-educated Arabs, especially the young, succumbed to nationalism because their contact with religion had become weak. Nationalism was for them much more than a rallying cry, it was an organisational device, to unite the people against a common enemy. They exceeded its bounds and sanctified nationalism running headlong after it, excluding and rejecting true religion in favour of pseudo-religion.

This issue greatly concerned Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan as he fought hard against it. He went to all the Arab lands in order to convey the clear, original ʾIslāmic call to unity. The studies and lectures collected in *al-ʿArab wa al-ʾIslām* refute the ideology of Arab nationalism and the new *jāhiliyyah*, they rouse ʾIslāmic sentiment and spirit in the hearts of the Arabs. It is a profoundly generous effort, from the heart of one inside the group being addressed, someone proud of his Arab ancestry, who wants to remind his fellow-Muslims to resume their natural position of leading humanity. The subjects and flavour of these talks can be gauged from the titles of the individual texts in the collection: *From the world to the Arabian Peninsula; From the Arabian Peninsula to the world*; *Listen! O Egypt*; *Listen! O Syria; Listen! O flower of the desert*; *Listen clearly to me, O Arabs!*; *Towards the banner of Muḥammad ﷺ O Arabs!*; *Nationalism in the scale of knowledge and history*; *The responsibility of the Arabs*; *Do not jeopardise the position of those who are loyal to ʾIslām by your position, O Arabs!*; *Are you going to adopt jāhiliyyah after having ʾIslām, O Arabs?*; *The essence of Egypt is ʾIslāmic, faithful, and adherent to Muḥammad ﷺ no matter how much grime has become heaped upon it.*

Shaykh Nadwī says in his critique of nationalism:

> The one who is more dangerous to this nation than Hulagu and Genghis Khan is the one who weakens this nation's bond with religion, uproots the fountain of *ʾīmān* and conviction from its hearts, and who comes as an obstacle between us and Muḥammad ﷺ. The one who commits this crime is actually paving the way for the destruction of this noble nation, its downfall and its bankruptcy. He is conspiring against its existence and power. He is altering it from a believing, organised and powerful nation with its own beloved leader, belief system and goals, to a nation that is splintered and weak, having no belief system, no goal, no message, and no leader in love of whom the hearts will unite and under whose flag the populace will rally.[228]

He argues that nationalism is a morally flawed ideology and, inevitably, is collapsing:

> Nationalism, in all parts of the world is a ship whose timbers have decayed and disintegrated, whose nails have fallen out, whose sailors are fighting against each other, and which is destined to sink. It is therefore not permissible for the Arabs to seek refuge in this floundering and wretched ship when they possess a rescue ship which is large enough for the entire world and which can convey all the people to the shore of peace.[229]

Shaykh Nadwī then urges the Arabs to the greatness they were and remain capable of:

> I cannot accept you to be people who are concerned with nothing except being insignificant tools in this materialistic system, who are only concerned about personal benefits and personal well-being, and to be that cowardly person whom the Arab poet, Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī disparaged:
>
> > God reviles an utterly destitute person whose sole wish and concern in life is to gain clothing and food.
>
> If only the Arab youth could reach the level of the pre-ʾIslāmic poet, ʾImruʾ al-Qays, through their high courage and aspirations:
>
> > If I were to try and acquire the barest livelihood, a small amount of wealth would suffice me without my searching for it. However, I am in search of deep-rooted glory, and people like me can achieve deep-rooted glory.
>
> Brothers, this deep-rooted glory is not the glory which the aspirant poet dreamt about. It is what ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz called to and acquired. It is what Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād and Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim al-Thaqafī raced towards and attained. Glory ought to be your perfect example and your sole purpose. You are most worthy of rebelling against the *jāhiliyyah* of the twentieth century just as your forefathers rebelled against the *jāhiliyyah* of the sixth

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[228] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-ʿArab wa al-ʾIslām* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-ʾIslāmī, 1981), p. 73.
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[229] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

century. You will have to fight against the current materialism just as your forefathers fought against the materialism of their age. You will have to sacrifice your luxuries, comforts and sweet dreams for the cause of ʾIslām, for the cause of the common good, and for the prosperity of humanity. You will have to rally around the flag of Muḥammad ﷺ, the flag of justice and truth, the flag of God in the world which God chose for you, and chose your nation and its army until the end of time.[230]

Two Conflicting Portraits

The complete title of this book is, *Two conflicting portraits as regards the propagational and educational results of the efforts of the greatest Messenger ﷺ and the life of the first community according to ʾAhl al-Sunnah and al-Shīᶜah*.

The most effective teaching, and the teaching whose effect most endures, is precept combined with example; if the precept is profoundly understood and believed, it is also sincerely lived and therefore it persuades. God's Messenger ﷺ was the most effective teacher of his Companions and they in turn of theirs. That is why ʾIslām so quickly acquired so many adherents, whose number in almost every part of the world has never ceased to grow. Yet, there is, within the house of ʾIslām, a sect that does not view the Companions as the model exemplars and transmitters of ʾIslām.

This sect holds, on the contrary, that after 23 years of the Prophet's teaching, barely three or four people remained true adherents of the religion in which he had trained them. As for the rest, according to this sect, they severed their bond with ʾIslām immediately after the Prophet's death. They showed that the companionship and tutelage of the Prophet ﷺ failed in its intended objective. Their only concern was the world and acquiring power in it, the Qurʾān and ʾIslām merely served as means to that end. This sect believes that its twelve *ʾAʾimmah* are sinless, their status equal to that of the Messenger of God ﷺ, and above the status of the other Prophets ﷺ. They believe that these *ʾAʾimmah* control the world and the hereafter, and that death is under their authority. And yet, if looked at from another angle, this portrayal identifies these *ʾAʾimmah* as people who had no courage to proclaim the truth, who lived in fear of threats and dangers, who followed a course of political expediency and dissimulation, relying on the device of *taqiyyah*.[231]

Shaykh Nadwī asks, which of these two portraits is becoming of the *duᶜāt* of ʾIslām? Which of the two is closer to a sound temperament, common sense,

[230] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

[231] The word *taqiyyah* in Shīᶜī terminology refers to dissimulation of one's religion under duress or in the face of threat or harm.

and a correct disposition? Which of the two is more likely to urge one towards action, hope, obedience and submission?

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan discusses the issue in a scholarly way, without aggressiveness, none of his writings degenerate into polemic,and are far removed from extremist or hateful rhetoric. [232] This quality of mild speech comes from a deeper well of conviction than the angry certainties of extremists. It is marked by sincerity in and for ʾIslām which leads to a humility that is settled, unaffected and pure. These qualities are hallmarks of the life and work of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, and the key to his success as a *dāᶜī*. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī recognised the civility of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's discourse:

> Look at how he treated the issue of vilifying the Companions ﷺ by the Shīᶜah, and how he refuted them academically in a manner which is considered to be the height of decency and decorum. This is in his book, *Two conflicting portraits*. By this, he refers to the portrait which the Shīᶜah embrace with regard to the Companions ﷺ, it is a dark picture which gives the impression that they did not benefit from the training, tutelage and directives of prophethood, even those who were closest to the Prophet ﷺ, people like ʾAbū Bakr, ᶜUmar, ᶜUthmān, Ṭalḥah, al-Zubayr, and ᶜĀʾishah ﷺ. If this was the case with such Companions, what can be said of the others? [...] The other portrait is the one which is presented by the ʾAhl al-Sunnah about the Companions ﷺ as students of the madrasah of Muḥammad ﷺ. They were the ones who [...] witnessed the signs of God from the depths of their eyes, who witnessed the angels descending upon them in order to keep them steadfast in the battles of Badr, Khandaq and Ḥunayn [...] This is the portrait which is becoming of the status of prophethood, the effect of Prophetic training and the directives of Muḥammad ﷺ. This is the portrait which coincides with the praises which are showered on the Companions in the Qurʾān in *suwar; al-Fatḥ*, *al-ʾAnfāl*, *al-Tawbah* and *al-Ḥashr*; and the *ʾaḥādīth* which state that they are the best generation of the *ʾummah*. This is the portrait which coincides with their well-known historical role. It is they who conveyed the Qurʾān to us, it is they who narrated the Prophetic Sunnah to us, it is they who conquered the different lands and taught ʾIslām to the different nations. Were it not for the courageous feats and the favours of the Companions ﷺ, ʾIslām would not have reached us. May God be pleased with them.[233]

[232] Shaykh Nadwī wrote a foreword to the scholarly work of Mawlānā Muḥammad Manzūr Nuᶜmānī, *Khumaynī - Iranian Revolution and the Shīᶜī Faith* (Lucknow, 1986). Mawlānā Muḥammad Manzūr Nuᶜmānī (1905-1997/1322-1417 AH) was a close friend, associate and companion of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan for some 50 years. He graduated from Dar al-ᶜUlūm Deoband where he studied under the illustrious ḥadīth scholar, ᶜAllāmah ʾAnwar Shah Kashmīrī (1875-1933/1291-1351 AH). Mawlānā Nuᶜmānī wrote nearly 100 books on *Tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth*, *Fiqh* and deviated sects. He taught *Ḥadīth* at Dar al-ᶜUlūm Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, and was associated with numerous educational and Daᶜwah institutes in India, and elsewhere.

[233] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜAraftuh*, pp. 63-64.

The Qādiyānīs and Qādiyānism: A study and analysis

Mirzā Ghulām ʾAḥmad Qādiyānī established the Qādiyānī movement in the Indian subcontinent at the turn of the twentieth century in the village of Qadiyān in Punjab. He started out as a *dāʿī* and soon claimed to be a renewer inspired by God. He then transgressed further to claim that he was the awaited Mahdī and the promised Messiah. He claimed prophethood for himself and that his prophethood was higher than that of Muḥammad ﷺ. He gained a following among the ignorant, and some followers with very worldly motives. He died in 1908/1326 AH leaving behind more than fifty books, publications and articles. The quality and sincerity of the man may be gauged from the fact that when the revelations in Arabic that he claimed to receive - he also claimed revelations in English! - were criticised for breaching the rules of Arabic grammar, he said this was but another instance of his *barakah*, of God's blessing, that he had been liberated from the rules of grammar!

This movement was, if not set up, fully supported by the British occupiers of India, for reasons that are obvious from the beliefs it proclaimed God and the religion of ʾIslām are far removed from such falsehoods, among their beliefs are:

1. The prophethood of Mirzā Ghulām is higher and better than that of Muḥammad ﷺ.
2. God fasts, prays *ṣalāh*, sleeps, awakens, writes, walks and engages in conjugal relations.
3. Prophethood did not end with Muḥammad ﷺ. Rather, it is continuous and God shall send a Messenger whenever necessary.
4. Ghulām ʾAḥmad is superior to all the Prophets; the Archangel would come to him, he received revelation, and the inspirations which he received are like the Qurʾān. They also say: there is no Qurʾān except the one which the promised Messiah (i.e. Ghulām) presented, there is no *ḥadīth* except what is in the light of his teachings, and there is no Prophet who is not under the leadership of Ghulām ʾAḥmad.
5. They believe that the book which they have is revealed from God; its name is *al-Kitāb al-Mubīn* (*the Manifest Book*), and it is different from the Qurʾān.
6. They believe that they are the followers of a new independent religion, a separate Sharīʿah, and that the companions of Ghulām are like the Companions of Muḥammad ﷺ.
7. They consider every Muslim to be an unbeliever until he enters the Qādiyānī religion. In like manner, a Qādiyānī who marries a non-Qādiyānī is considered to be an unbeliever.
8. They consider alchohol, opium and other intoxicating drugs as lawful.

9. They announced the cancellation of *jihād*, while demanding absolute obedience to the British government because, according to them, it is the ruling authority confirmed in the Qurʾān.

The *ʿulamāʾ* and the people of *ʾīmān* were astonished by the Qādiyānī *fitnah* from its very first day and exposed its vile creed and practices. Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAlī Mongerī (the founder of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ), ʿAllāmah ʾAnwar Shāh Kashmīrī and Shaykh Thanāʾ ʾAllāh ʾAmritsarī were at the head of the *ʿulamāʾ* who combated this movement in their writings and speeches. They explained the deviation and unbelief (*kufr*) of the Qādiyānīs in many books in Urdu. The Qādiyānīs then shifted their attention and message outside India, while still targeting Muslims, in the Arab world, in Indonesia, and in the young ʾIslāmic countries of Africa and Asia.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Raipūrī, at whose hands Shaykh Nadwī received his spiritual training, was among the senior figures who combated the heart and mind of the Qādiyānī problem and he also urged other leaders to stand up to this *fitnah*. It was a constant theme of his assemblies and he performed a great religious service in this regard. He became so well known for it, that talking against the Qādiyāniyyah was a means of gaining proximity to Shaykh Raipūrī and earning his love. It was he who instructed Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan to write a refutation in Arabic, explaining the Qādiyānī creed. At the same time, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's observations when he visited the eastern Arabian lands at the beginning of the 1950s/1370s AH created a strong urge in him to present the Qādiyānī creed and teachings in Arabic so that the Arab *ʿulamāʾ* should be properly notified and alerted to the danger.

The Qādiyāniyyah and Qādiyānism discusses the personality of the head of the Qādiyānī religion in an analytical and scholarly manner, shedding light on the conditions, circumstances and accompanying phenomena which played a part in the rise of this movement, and revealed the unscrupulous dealings of Western colonialists. He demonstrates that Qādiyāniyyah and Qādiyānism is a rebellion against the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ, a people in opposition to his people, and a religion in opposition to his religion.

General *daʿwah* books

Daʿwah is the abiding concern and motivation for all of Shaykh Nadwī's writings and his activities. In a number of his works, however, *daʿwah* is itself the focus, and *duʿāt* are the ones being addressed. It is a selection of these works that I review in this section.

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The Qādiyāniyyah and Qādiyānism discusses the personality of the head of the Qādiyānī religion in an analytical and scholarly manner, shedding light on the conditions, circumstances and accompanying phenomena which played a part in the rise of this movement, and revealed the unscrupulous dealings of Western colonialists. He demonstrates that Qādiyāniyyah and Qādiyānism is a rebellion against the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ, a people in opposition to his people, and a religion in opposition to his religion.

General *daʿwah* books

Daʿwah is the abiding concern and motivation for all of Shaykh Nadwī's writings and his activities. In a number of his works, however, *daʿwah* is itself the focus, and *duʿāt* are the ones being addressed. It is a selection of these works that I review in this section.

Striking examples of daʿwah in the Qurʾān and Sunnah

One of the aims of the founders of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ was to educate Muslims, some of whom would be motivated to perform *daʿwah*. For that reason, there was a strong emphasis on the teaching of Qurʾān and *Ḥadīth* and a desire to take that teaching to higher levels thereby preparing students to become fluent in writing and speaking Arabic. That in turn made it possible for students to approach the Qurʾān directly, and to be fluent and expert in it, both are essential for service in ʾIslāmic teaching and *daʿwah*.

In 1980/1400 AH, Nadwah's Higher Institute for Daʿwah and ʾIslāmic Thought was opened. The occasion was marked by a series of lectures on the method of *daʿwah* in the Qurʾān and Sunnah. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was eminently qualified for this task by his expertise and eloquence in Arabic and by his extensive experience of studying and teaching the sciences and *tafsīr* of the Qurʾān.

He had already published academic and literary articles highlighting aspects of rhetoric and wisdom in the Book of God. *Striking Examples of daʿwah in the Qurʾān and Sunnah* carries this work further, explaining the stories in the Qurʾān and the methods of *daʿwah* used by the Prophets ﷺ, notably their style of speech when addressing and rectifying their people. These lectures are an indispensable aid for students and teachers of the Qurʾān and a guide for *duʿāt*.

Towards ʾIslām Anew

The lectures collected in this book were delivered in different locations and on different occasions over many years. They share the common theme of urging Muslims to make a new commitment to their religion in an era deeply troubled by inward and outward suffering. That suffering is the result of people turning away from belief in God and the Last Day, being heedless of, or even rejecting, the teachings of His Messengers ﷺ, and plunging themselves, instead, into destructive competition for the trappings of this world and transitory pleasures. The lectures in this book are entitled as follows: *To the representatives of ʾIslāmic countries*; *The sanctuary of humanity*; *The plus and minus in the history of ʾIslām*; *Between the picture and the reality*; *A revolution in thinking*; *Between taxation and guidance*; *Two conflicting daʿwāt*; *The ruin of jāhiliyyah*; *The crises of faith and morals*; and *An apostasy but no ʾAbū Bakr to combat it*.

The lectures are addressed mostly to the Muslims, and the Arabs in particular because the sun of ʾIslām first rose on their horizon, and God enabled them to be the first bearers of the ʾIslāmic message to the civilised nations of the world, carrying that responsibility forward, to then lead and guide the world. Shaykh Nadwī reminds Muslims of how their forefathers

went into the main cities and centres of *jāhiliyyah* offering to show people the way, "from the worship of slaves to the worship of God, from the constriction of the world to its expanse, from the injustices of religions to the justice of ʾIslām." They were able to rescue many among the Romans from worshipping Jesus, the cross, priests and monks; among the Persians from worshipping fire and their royalty; among the Hindus from worshipping the cow and countless other deities. They were able to guide them to the worship of God alone, to open up and enrich their world morally, intellectually and culturally; they were able, in ample measure, to replace the injustices of religion with the justice of ʾIslām. Now we live in the midst of a new *jāhiliyyah*, so there is a need for a new effort to rescue people from the worship of the gods of the world and teach them the worship of God alone, to open for them the way to contentment, abstinence, spiritual well-being and serenity; to bring them out of the injustices of the *jāhilī* political and social systems to the justice of ʾIslām.[234]

The Muslims of today are living the picture of ʾIslām rather than its reality; and the picture no more serves the purpose than a picture of food serves a hungry person:

> The greatest service to the ʾIslāmic community is to invite the vast majority of the community to shift away from the picture of ʾIslām to its essence. It is for this purpose that the workers should strive, and spend their energies in blowing the spirit of ʾIslām into the body of the ʾIslāmic world. They should spare no efforts in this regard. In this way, the condition of the ʾIslāmic community will change, and consequently, so will the condition of the entire world. The condition of the world is subservient to the condition of the ʾIslāmic community. And the condition of the ʾIslāmic community is subservient to the essence of ʾIslām. If the essence of ʾIslām disappears from the Muslim community, who is going to invite the world to the essence of ʾIslām, and who is going to blow a spirit into it? ʿĪsā ﷺ said, "You are the salt of the earth, and if the saltiness in the salt disappears, what is it that will make the food salty?"[235]

Daʿwah need not be confined to Muslims, rather it should also be presented to a "confused and astray Europe, with sincerity, integrity, kindness, strength, confidence and faith." Muslims, who have "lived for a long time at the back of the caravan" should "assume the position of leadership and guidance of the caravan of humanity and the front row of nations."[236] They will do so with confidence if they remember that God has promised to help this religion and those who call to it.

Certainly the Muslims themselves are in dire need of a new ʾIslāmic *daʿwah*, many of them move in the practice of their faith, towards the edge of apostasy:

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[234] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *ʾIlā al-ʾIslām min Jadīd* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿIlmī, 2000), p. 24.
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[…] The Muslims are also in need of scholarly societies and institutions committed to producing effective ʾIslāmic literature, which returns the educated young to ʾIslām in its widest meaning, re-establishes in their minds the fundamentals of ʾIslām, nourishes their minds and hearts, and liberates them from unconscious assimilation to Western habits of mind and attitude that are explicitly godless.[237]

Speaking frankly to our Arab and Muslim brothers

In the course of a two-week visit to the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait in the middle of November 1983 (Ṣafar 1404 AH), Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan gave the following lectures on the condition of the ʾIslāmic world and the crisis of the Muslims:

The role of the ʾIslāmic community in the international academic and writing movement and the creation of libraries, on the occasion of the opening of the library of the great ʾIslāmic scholar of Sharjah, Shaykh ʿAbd ʾAllāh ʾAlī al-Maḥmūd, the former head of the Centre for ʾIslāmic Daʿwah.

The real crisis of the era, in the auditorium of the University of the United Arab Emirates in al-ʿAyn.

The role of women in building an ʾIslāmic society, in the Girls' College of the University of the United Arab Emirates in al-ʿAyn.

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There have to be people of power prohibiting corruption on earth in every era, at the ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb Masjid in Sharjah.

ʾIslām and human civilisation, in the auditorium of the Faculty of Sciences at Kuwait University in al-Khālidiyyah.

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These lectures are characterised by a frank, clear and forceful presentation of the realities of the present condition of the Arabs and Muslims, their distance from seriousness and commitment, their lapsing into negligence and relaxation. Shaykh Nadwī urges a return to Arab pride and ʾIslāmic self-esteem, to the deep faith which moves the rudder of life. That faith governed the thinking, actions and ways of the first Arab Muslims, and was the source of the energy that enabled them to spread ʾIslām after conquering half of the world in half a century, he says:

The world today, no matter what you read about the power of the European nations, is a world in destruction, a splintered society, a decayed society, a society which has lost its soul, a society which carries no thrust. But where is that counter thrust to jolt this civilisation? A civilisation which has become ripe so that the time to harvest it has come. But where is that basket into which that fruit might fall? Muḥammad ʾIqbāl put it thus, when he said, "Western civilisation has matured and become ripe. The time to harvest has come. The fruit shall soon fall from the branch, but where is that basket which will carry this fruit? There is no alternative there. The vacuum is unnatural. There is a vacuum in the nations, in the civilisations, in the system of government, and in the real world. There has to be an alternative. The Muslims were an alternative to the Roman and Iranian civilisations. God chose the Muslims, bestowed on them world leadership, the ability to guide and steer, and profound love. The conquered nations loved them and preferred them to people of their own religion and race."[238]

The fragrances of ʾīmān

This is a collection bringing together lectures given to large gatherings in Yemen on different occasions with lectures in Jordan on the subject of the Night Journey and Ascension (*al-ʾIsrāʾ wa al-Miʿrāj*) of the Messenger ﷺ. The natural emotion of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan poured out in these lectures. He was affected by the weakened and humiliated condition of the Arabs and spoke from an injured heart. His words aroused courage and awakened hearts from torpor, both because of the suffering of that time and place, and because that place revived his pride in its glorious past.

The talks he gave in Sanaa, Yemen, were at the invitation of the Students Union and the Higher Board for Academic Institutes. In them he joined Yemeni wisdom, Yemeni understanding, with an *Indian* (indirect and allusive) style of inviting to God. He stressed the importance of conveying ʾIslām to the rulers so that they make ʾIslām their concern and preoccupation, rather than a group of believers striving to attain the seats of power. He made reference, alluding to the Prophetic *ḥadīth* in which the Messenger of God ﷺ praised the faith and conviction of the people of Yemen, to the religious self-esteem of Yemeni Muslims and their strong connection with ʾ*Īmān*, "ʾ*Īmān* is in Yemen, and

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wisdom is in Yemen, so let *ʾīmān* be Yemeni." His words seemed to stir ideas and feelings present in the subconscious of his audience and bring them into the open. This was especially so with regard to the expression "paralysis in Yemeni good fortune, *shallāl al-Yamn al-Yamanī*" which was widely discussed in the academic, political and social circles.

The strong, consistent impression from these lectures is of an outpouring from the heart, a demand for continued attachment and restlessness for the sake of the well-being of the Muslims, a demand for a new Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and a new battle of Ḥiṭṭīn[239] or a battle like it. A demand to awaken a paralysed *ʾīmān* and fill the void in ʾIslāmic society. Shaykh Nadwī stressed the need to recover a distinctive, independent ʾIslāmic identity, a re-structuring of society which requires "Independent thought, independent planning, and an independent personality. However, we have lost independent intellect, independent thought and an independent civilisation. Many of these countries have recently gained political and administrative freedom from European colonialism. But they did not gain intellectual and cultural freedom. The West is still perching on our heads, deeply embedded in our hearts where it is laying its eggs and hatching them. We have to free ourselves totally, and we must become a free nation in every sense of the word."[240]

Journalism

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan joined Masᶜūd ᶜĀlam Nadwī and Muḥammad Nāẓim Nadwī to edit the Arabic periodical, *al-Ḍiyāʾ*, first issued from Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ in 1932/1350 AH. Produced under the auspices of ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī and Dr Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, it was the first periodical issued in India in the Arabic language. It provided an opportuntity to practise the Arabic language for the learners at Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ. Its publication from a non-Arab country was a great event welcomed by leading figures, notably ᶜAllāmah Rashīd Riḍā. In the May 1932 (Muḥarram 1351 AH) issue of *al-Manār*, he wrote *A new awakening for the revival of the language of ʾIslām, Arabic, in the Indian lands*, welcoming *al-Ḍiyāʾ*:

The editor of this periodical, al-Manār, was probably the first in this century to realise the Muslims' neglect over the past few centuries of the fact that ʾIslām made Arabic a language for all Muslims subservient to their religion, as the Book of God is revealed in a clear Arabic language, and so too is the Sunnah of His Arab Messenger ﷺ. This is something which is unanimously accepted by Muslims. The Rightly-Guided Successors (al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn), the Umayyads and the ᶜAbbāsids spread this language to non-Arab peoples. This continued until the non-Arabs became

[239] Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn defeated the Crusaders on 4th July 1187 (25th Rabīᶜ al-Thānī 583 AH) at the battle of Ḥiṭṭīn in Galilī.
[240] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Nafaḥāt al-ʾĪmān*, p. 108.

strong, had their own countries which were fanatical about their own languages and gave preference to them over the language of their religion. This was due to the ignorance of their kings and rulers about the reality of ʾIslām and its foundation on the basis of religious, social and political unity, which affirms the brotherhood of ʾIslām, and affirms that its people are a single nation not differentiated through nationality, land or language.

We had been inviting the Muslims to revive the language of their religion for decades, and from among all the non-Arab nations, our highest hopes lay with the Indian people due to their attachment to the Urdu language which was not on the basis of a nationalistic solidarity like that of the Persians and Turks. Rather, it was on the basis of an ʾIslāmic solidarity, which is the strongest of all solidarities. This is not the occasion for going into the detail of what made Urdu the language of instruction for the masses and made Arabic the language of the ᶜulamāʾ alone. I have spoken to the ᶜulamāʾ and leaders from among them, over a long period when they visited Egypt regarding the necessity of reviving the Arabic language in their country. They acknowledge the obligation of doing this but excuse themselves from discharging that obligation.

When I visited India in 1912/1330 AH in response to an invitation extended to me by Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ in order to head its general conference, I spoke to many about this responsibility and need. I also made reference to this in the general talks which I delivered in the educational institutes, especially to the ᶜulamāʾ of the Deoband school. I found them agreeable and warmly receptive.

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[241] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAᶜlām*, pp. 110-11. Also see, pp. 112-13 in *Rasāʾil al-ʾAᶜlām* for another request from Dr Saᶜīd for more articles on this theme.

wisdom is in Yemen, so let *ʾīmān* be Yemeni." His words seemed to stir ideas and feelings present in the subconscious of his audience and bring them into the open. This was especially so with regard to the expression "paralysis in Yemeni good fortune, *shallāl al-Yamn al-Yamanī*" which was widely discussed in the academic, political and social circles.

The strong, consistent impression from these lectures is of an outpouring from the heart, a demand for continued attachment and restlessness for the sake of the well-being of the Muslims, a demand for a new Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and a new battle of Ḥiṭṭīn[239] or a battle like it. A demand to awaken a paralysed *ʾīmān* and fill the void in ʾIslāmic society. Shaykh Nadwī stressed the need to recover a distinctive, independent ʾIslāmic identity, a re-structuring of society which requires "Independent thought, independent planning, and an independent personality. However, we have lost independent intellect, independent thought and an independent civilisation. Many of these countries have recently gained political and administrative freedom from European colonialism. But they did not gain intellectual and cultural freedom. The West is still perching on our heads, deeply embedded in our hearts where it is laying its eggs and hatching them. We have to free ourselves totally, and we must become a free nation in every sense of the word."[240]

Journalism

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan joined Masᶜūd ᶜĀlam Nadwī and Muḥammad Nāzim Nadwī to edit the Arabic periodical, *al-Ḍiyāʾ*, first issued from Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ in 1932/1350 AH. Produced under the auspices of ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī and Dr Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, it was the first periodical issued in India in the Arabic language. It provided an opportuntity to practise the Arabic language for the learners at Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ. Its publication from a non-Arab country was a great event welcomed by leading figures, notably ᶜAllāmah Rashīd Riḍā. In the May 1932 (Muḥarram 1351 AH) issue of *al-Manār*, he wrote *A new awakening for the revival of the language of ʾIslām, Arabic, in the Indian lands*, welcoming *al-Ḍiyāʾ*:

The editor of this periodical, *al-Manār*, was probably the first in this century to realise the Muslims' neglect over the past few centuries of the fact that ʾIslām made Arabic a language for all Muslims subservient to their religion, as the Book of God is revealed in a clear Arabic language, and so too is the Sunnah of His Arab Messenger ﷺ. This is something which is unanimously accepted by Muslims. The Rightly-Guided Successors (*al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn*), the Umayyads and the ᶜAbbāsids spread this language to non-Arab peoples. This continued until the non-Arabs became

[239] Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn defeated the Crusaders on 4th July 1187 (25th Rabīᶜ al-Thānī 583 AH) at the battle of Ḥiṭṭīn in Galilī.
[240] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Nafaḥāt al-ʾĪmān*, p. 108.

strong, had their own countries which were fanatical about their own languages and gave preference to them over the language of their religion. This was due to the ignorance of their kings and rulers about the reality of ʾIslām and its foundation on the basis of religious, social and political unity, which affirms the brotherhood of ʾIslām, and affirms that its people are a single nation not differentiated through nationality, land or language.

We had been inviting the Muslims to revive the language of their religion for decades, and from among all the non-Arab nations, our highest hopes lay with the Indian people due to their attachment to the Urdu language which was not on the basis of a nationalistic solidarity like that of the Persians and Turks. Rather, it was on the basis of an ʾIslāmic solidarity, which is the strongest of all solidarities. This is not the occasion for going into the detail of what made Urdu the language of instruction for the masses and made Arabic the language of the *ᶜulamāʾ* alone. I have spoken to the *ᶜulamāʾ* and leaders from among them, over a long period when they visited Egypt regarding the necessity of reviving the Arabic language in their country. They acknowledge the obligation of doing this but excuse themselves from discharging that obligation.

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[242] *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

V. HIS DAʿWAH AND TARBIYAH

To present Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan as a *dāʿī* is effectively, to gather all of his efforts and all his qualities under one heading. *Daʿwah* is the calling and function of God's Messengers ﷺ and whoever does *daʿwah* well is doing the best of what human beings have been created capable of doing. We must understand therefore what it means to *do daʿwah well*. In this chapter I review the talents and characteristics which qualified Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan for the high rank of a *dāʿī*, what distinguished him in the eyes of his peers and contemporaries, what the methods and sources of his *daʿwah* were, the principles he sought to establish in education and training (*tarbiyah*), the differences between his ways and those of others also engaged in *daʿwah* and ʾIslāmic education, and his handling of those differences.

A righteous example and his most important qualities

We recall that his family environment and upbringing emphasised knowledge and love of ʾIslām above all things; the heartfelt letter he received from his mother pleading with him not to become distracted from the path of *daʿwah* by further pursuit of studies in English and Western culture; at the age of twenty-three he was sent to Dr ʾAmbedkar in Mumbai, the leader of India's *untouchables*, after he expressed interest in turning away from the religion that was harming his people. Clearly, people recognised in ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, from an early age, qualities appropriate to the responsibility of a *dāʿī*. Here we will discuss those qualities for which Shaykh Nadwī was praised.

Strong *ʾīmān* and sound belief

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's learned upbringing and the environment of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ grounded his belief in the Qurʾān and Sunnah firmly within the boundaries of ʾAhl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah. He never associated, at any point in his life, with the practices that had spread among Muslims in India under the influence of Hindu customs and which, despite the claims of groups like the Barilwiyyah, have no basis in ʾIslāmic sources. Shaykh Nadwī was free of the so-called *taṣawwuf* of these groups. On the other hand, he was also free of the rigid narrowness of those groups who called themselves *salafī*, "His was a vibrant and true *salafiyyah*, not the outward and argumentative *salafiyyah* which we see in some of those who attribute to themselves the title of *salaf* and confine *salafiyyah* to a long beard, a short garment, and waging war based upon the least rationalisation of the texts on the attributes of ʾAllāh (*ṣifāt*). The *salafī* belief according to Shaykh Nadwī is:

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absolute *tawḥīd* with regard to God, which is never tainted by associationism (*shirk*); a deep conviction in the hereafter that is never overcome by doubt; a firm belief in prophethood which is never interrupted by hesitancy or dubiety; complete trust in the Qur$^{\prime}$ān and Sunnah, the two sources for beliefs, injunctions, morals and conduct."[243]

Sincerity of intention

Shaykh Nadwī emphasised sincerity and interrogation of one's intention in all situations, to ensure that one is not motivated by the desire to make a mark, to be praised or to be popular:

> We must not do anything without first correcting the intention. We must be conscious of the merits and warnings which have come to us from God and we should do those acts with faith and expecting reward for them, and not do them as a habit, a personal yearning or a natural need, even when seeking lawful sustenance and the means of earning a livelihood, whether an occupation, business, farming or craft. This is the meaning of an authentic *ḥadīth* which reached the level of immense popularity according to some *ḥadīth* scholars, and with which $^{\prime}$Imām al-Bukhārī commenced his magnum opus, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Deeds are weighed by intentions, and each person shall receive what he intended." This is one of the $^{\prime}$*aḥādīth* around which religion revolves. It is stated that $^{\prime}$Imām al-Shāfi^{c}ī said, "This *ḥadīth* comprises one third of knowledge, and enters in to seventy aspects of jurisprudence."[244]

There is no route to sincerity other than God-wariness or piety (*taqwā*), being conscious that God sees perfectly the inner and the outer of a person, and being fearful of displeasing and disappointing Him. Shaykh Nadwī would advise, "Fear of God in private and in public." "Fear God wherever you may be." "Say, 'My Lord is God', then remain steadfast."[245] Evidently, he was himself the best example of one who followed this advice, as all of those who commented on Shaykh $^{\prime}$Abū al-Ḥasan's sincerity and purity noted. For example, the learned Ṣūfī, Shaykh Waṣī $^{\prime}$Allāh Fataḥpūrī said, "I have come across many people, but I have not come across anyone with a purer heart than $^{\prime}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī."[246] And again he said in a letter to him, "My heart does not trust anyone who visits me in the way it trusts you."[247]

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[243] Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Shaykh $^{\prime}$Abū Hasan al-Nadwi: Kamā ^{c}Araftuh*, p. 78.
[244] $^{\prime}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *al-^{c}Aqīdah wa al-^{c}Ibādah wa al-Sulūk* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1983), p. 214.
[245] Cited by $^{\prime}$Ustādh Khālid al-Dādisī in *Majallāt al-$^{\prime}$Adab al-$^{\prime}$Islāmī*, 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh $^{\prime}$Abū al-Ḥasan), p. 171.
[246] Mumshād ^{c}Alī Qāsimī, *$^{\prime}$Abū al-Ḥasan Nadwī, $^{\prime}$Akābir wa Mashāhīr $^{\prime}$Ummat ki Naẓar mīn* (Phulat, Muzaffarnagar: Shāh Walī $^{\prime}$Allāh Academy, 1998), p. 219.
[247] *Ibid*., p. 220.

Patience, perseverance and abstinence

A life sincerely committed to *da^{c}wah* cannot be a life of ease, the *dā^{c}ī* must travel when he might prefer to stay put; teach when he might prefer to study; speak when he would rather listen; accept the taxations, when addressing strangers, of civility and cheerfulness and energy when he might prefer to be at home with family and friends. Moreover, a life committed to *da^{c}wah* will encounter the daily challenges of individuals who are dismissive, unpleasant, even angry. How deep the well of Shaykh Nadwī's personal resources must have been for him to respond to such provocations with only kindness and patience. As $^{\prime}$Ustādh Muḥammad al-Rabī^{c} said, "One of his qualities was that he would exercise patience over the pain caused to him by people, he would bear this with a smiling face, abstain from exacting revenge from the person, and continue interacting with the person by doing good and displaying noble character."[248]

His patience was balanced with steadfastness and perseverance. He was able to sustain such *ṣabr* through a whole lifetime of work as a *dā^{c}ī* because he refused worldly expectations and expected reward only from God. He preferred what God gave him over what other people have. Shaykh Nadwī observed, "Correct and pure abstinence in this world and from its chattels cannot be realised as long as the reality of this world is not clearly exposed, and as long as a person does not experience this state, 'As for the abode of the hereafter, that is the true life' (*Sūrat al-^{c}Ankabūt*, 29: 64); 'And whatever is with God is far better and more enduring' (*Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28: 60). This cannot be realised without conviction, correct recognition, and connection with God."[249]

Many people commented on Shaykh Nadwī's abstinence from the things of this world. $^{\prime}$Ustādh ^{c}Abd al-Quddūs $^{\prime}$Abū Ṣāliḥ wrote in this regard:

> Shaykh Nadwī was from among those ^{c}*ulamā$^{\prime}$* whose actions concurred with their words, and whose outward selves testified to the purity of their internal selves. He was from among the genuine abstinent people who did not go to pains to be abstinent and ascetic rather, it was natural in them. During his journeys, he would prefer living with his poor associates instead of living in grand hotels. As for his house which I had visited, probably did not have anything worth selling. His bed was simple and humble - that too - if we could refer to it as a bed. I used to look at the dishes of food for his breakfast, lunch and supper, it would seem to me that they would not satisfy the hunger of even one person. However, he, his associates and

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[248] $^{\prime}$Ustādh Muḥammad al-Rabī^{c}, *Majallāt al-$^{\prime}$Adab al-$^{\prime}$Islāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh $^{\prime}$Abū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 148.
[249] $^{\prime}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Rabbāniyyah lā Rahbāniyyah* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), pp. 39-40.

brothers would all eat from there. Just a few morsels of food would suffice them by the blessing of supplication and contentment.[250]

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī remembers him as the most conscientiously abstinent person he had ever met:

> I did not see anyone like him in our times with regard to his abstinence in the world, disdain for its chattels, rejection of its attractions, and the fact that he was not overcome by its deceptions. He could have lived an opulent life by virtue of the position he enjoyed among his people and in the world. […] However, he wanted a different life for himself, a life of those who have control over their hearts, who live in this world without the world living in them, who own the world without the world owning them. It was as though he came from the first era of ʾIslām to this present time in order to represent ʾIbrāhīm ibn ʾAdham, al-Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ or al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad. They are the ones who live in this world with hearts of the people of the hereafter, who walk on earth with their eyes directed towards the heavens. The Shaykh therefore insisted on living like those abstinent personalities and righteous ʾAʾimmah of the past. It is as though he took some light from his ancestor, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ﷺ, who, when the world came to him, said, "Get away from me. Go and deceive someone else. I have divorced you three times, there is no revoking this divorce. Ah! What few possessions I have, how long is this journey, and how dangerous is this road!"[251]

Generosity and altruism

Generosity and altruism are dominant, pervasive attributes of the lives of God's Messengers ﷺ and those who inherit their functions, the devout *ʿulamāʾ*, *duʿāt* and reformers. Shaykh Nadwī said, "Among the qualities of the men of God and those who practise the Sunnah are generosity and altruism. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim expounded upon the reasons for open-heartedness in his book, *Zād al-Maʿād*. He speaks of the deep impact which kindness to creation, and giving aid financially and materially has in creating open-heartedness, magnanimity and contentment of the heart."[252] He also observed that:

> One of the difficult occasions of altruism is for a person to treat his enemies and antagonists not only with open-heartedness, but by pardoning them and doing good to them. And above that is supplicating in their favour and advising them. This is a lofty position which none can attain except the person who has passed the boundaries of pride and egotism, who forgot his own self, whom God blessed with His bounties, and bestowed on him peace and joy, which melts every type of enmity and opposition. He thus finds his heart filled with the urge to advise and console his enemies.[253]

[250] *Majallāt al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 17.
[251] *Ibid.*
[252] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rabbāniyyah lā Rahbāniyyah*, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), p. 41.
[253] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

> The position of pardoning, doing good, showing affection and mercy to ones enemies is far higher and loftier than financial and material altruism. It is a position which is only enjoyed by the true friends of God (*ʾAwliyāʾ*) and His truthful servants (*Ṣiddīqūn*).[254]

Modesty, humility and nobility of character

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan loved the *ʿulamāʾ* and valued their *jihād* on behalf of ʾIslām. He visited them and wrote about them in his books, explaining their academic positions and their service to ʾIslām. He wrote and spoke from a heart clean of jealousy, rivalry and any impulse to cause harm. Even when refuting arguments on the basis of strong proofs from the Qurʾān and Sunnah, which he did forthrightly, he remained respectful and courteous. Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī wrote about him:

> He possessed integrity in speech and writing. I never heard him insult anyone by his speech or speak ill of anyone. […] However, this did not stop him from criticising ideas and opinions which he felt were incorrect. For example, we see him criticising Mawlānā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb, while acknowledging their rank and position. But this criticism was of a just scholar, not of a malicious attacker. He criticised individuals, organisations, movements and governments. But he did this with absolute decorum, kind words, and with the language of a loving friend and trustworthy adviser, not with the language of one who considers himself above others, who bears malice towards them, or is waiting in ambush for them.[255]

Shaykh Nadwī did not like affectation in speech, dress, gesture, posture or action. He was himself very simple in dress, food and housing. He disliked ceremonies and flattery. He once wrote, "Humility and self-denial are among the special attributes of the *ʾawliyāʾ*. This is one of the highest positions in religion. It is superior to a thousand virtues and merits. Man can never reach this position unless his ego is killed and he purifies his heart of all defects and affiliations."[256] He added, "When man reaches this position of servanthood and self-denial, he will not see himself having any right over another, he will not demand anything from him, he will not castigate anyone and he will not exact revenge for himself in any circumstance."[257]

The Prophet ﷺ said, "I have been sent to perfect noble character."[258] The errors that he was sent to correct, centre around a sense of one's own superiority and the corresponding meanness of spirit that will not recognise another's virtue or effort, nor forgive another's fault, no matter how slight, but prefer to remind him of it. The nobility of character that he came to teach and embody

[254] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[255] Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, p. 6.
[256] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rabbāniyyah lā Rahbāniyyah*, pp. 44-45.
[257] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[258] Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭāʾ*, k. *Ḥusn al-Khuluq*, b. *Mā Jāʾ fī Ḥusn al-Khuluq*.

brothers would all eat from there. Just a few morsels of food would suffice them by the blessing of supplication and contentment.[250]

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī remembers him as the most conscientiously abstinent person he had ever met:

> I did not see anyone like him in our times with regard to his abstinence in the world, disdain for its chattels, rejection of its attractions, and the fact that he was not overcome by its deceptions. He could have lived an opulent life by virtue of the position he enjoyed among his people and in the world. […] However, he wanted a different life for himself, a life of those who have control over their hearts, who live in this world without the world living in them, who own the world without the world owning them. It was as though he came from the first era of ʾIslām to this present time in order to represent ʾIbrāhīm ibn ʾAdham, al-Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ or al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad. They are the ones who live in this world with hearts of the people of the hereafter, who walk on earth with their eyes directed towards the heavens. The Shaykh therefore insisted on living like those abstinent personalities and righteous ʾAʾimmah of the past. It is as though he took some light from his ancestor, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ﷺ, who, when the world came to him, said, "Get away from me. Go and deceive someone else. I have divorced you three times, there is no revoking this divorce. Ah! What few possessions I have, how long is this journey, and how dangerous is this road!"[251]

Generosity and altruism

Generosity and altruism are dominant, pervasive attributes of the lives of God's Messengers ﷺ and those who inherit their functions, the devout *ʿulamāʾ*, *duʿāt* and reformers. Shaykh Nadwī said, "Among the qualities of the men of God and those who practise the Sunnah are generosity and altruism. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim expounded upon the reasons for open-heartedness in his book, *Zād al-Maʿād*. He speaks of the deep impact which kindness to creation, and giving aid financially and materially has in creating open-heartedness, magnanimity and contentment of the heart."[252] He also observed that:

> One of the difficult occasions of altruism is for a person to treat his enemies and antagonists not only with open-heartedness, but by pardoning them and doing good to them. And above that is supplicating in their favour and advising them. This is a lofty position which none can attain except the person who has passed the boundaries of pride and egotism, who forgot his own self, whom God blessed with His bounties, and bestowed on him peace and joy, which melts every type of enmity and opposition. He thus finds his heart filled with the urge to advise and console his enemies.[253]

[250] *Majallāt al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 17.
[251] *Ibid.*
[252] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rabbāniyyah lā Rahbāniyyah*, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), p. 41.
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centres around magnanimity, which is expressed in open-handed, big-hearted generosity, readiness not to see another's fault if that is possible, or, if that is not possible, to forgive quickly and fully, to love and praise warmly whenever it is due, and to trust freely. Shaykh ^{3}Abū al-Ḥasan embodied this nobility of character in every respect. He was never pompous, never a know-all. Self-righteousness and hard-heartedness had no place in his voice, manners or work. Far from seeking or taking revenge, he never spoke harshly about any. Also, since he never desired rank or status, he was able to show the same civility in speech and the same refinement of spirit to whomsoever he was addressing, and he was, accordingly, admired and loved by all classes, the elite and the ordinary people.

Intensity and vibrancy of feeling

Though Shaykh Nadwī did not, to my knowledge, compose poetry, he had the sensibilities and imagination that we associate with the best work of poets. This enabled him as a *dā^{c}ī* to convey to others his ardent love of God, of His Messenger ﷺ, and His religion. He was able to touch their hearts and to kindle the same ardent love in them. Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī explains this aspect very well:

> When speech emanates from the heart, it enters the hearts of others. When it emanates from the tongue, it does not go beyond the ears. It was for this reason that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī made an impact on all those who attended his lessons and assemblies, as opposed to the assemblies of others. It is for this reason that the saying goes: the woman who wails over the deceased is not like the woman who is truly bereft.
>
> This vibrant heart lives with God while loving and hating, hoping and fearing, yearning and apprehending, cautious about the hereafter, yet longing for its Lord's mercy. In like manner, this heart lives with the concerns of the vast *^{3}ummah*. It lives with its pains and hopes. One worry does not divert it from another, nor one country from another, nor one group of Muslims from another. It was this very sentiment which caused him to recite so many of ^{3}Iqbāl's poems, which made him feel as though it was his own poetry, as though he was its composer and not its narrator. Similar was the case with the poetry of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī, especially the poems regarding love for God. It was this very sentiment which caused him to give special attention to those who possessed vibrant hearts, people like al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, al-Ghazzālī, al-Jīlānī, Ibn Taymiyyah, Sirhindī and others.[259]

Complete dedication

I have mentioned Shaykh Nadwī's perseverance in his service of ^{3}Islām. He was, as we saw in earlier chapters, dedicated to the defence of Muslim rights in

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India. His dedication did not waver in the face of obstacles, nor did it switch off after a particular issue had been dealt with. He said in his advice to *du^{c}āt*:

> Concern must control and overpower the feelings of the *dā^{c}ī*, it must flow in his body like blood, and it must be completely intertwined with him. It is only then that a *dā^{c}ī* can be a *dā^{c}ī* who is inspired and assisted by God, and for whom success is guaranteed. Such a *dā^{c}ī* cannot experience any failure. So the first condition is that *da^{c}wah* should not be an art, occupation or discipline. It must not be a mere skill and talent in oratory. Rather, it must be a belief and a concern. It must be a faith which completely encompasses the human soul and fills all parts of the soul to the extent that if a person wants to divest himself of it, he is unable to do so.[260]

Desire for knowledge

^{3}Ustādh ^{3}Aḥmad Shirbāṣī observes in his biographical notes on Shaykh Nadwī:

> My honourable brother, ^{3}Abū al-Ḥasan, had an intense love to acquire books and talk about them. Books were the most honourable thing in his sight from among the possessions of this world. The most valuable item which could be given to him as a gift was a book which he liked and delighted in. ^{3}Abū al-Ḥasan did not acquire books to beautify his house, but to digest them by reading, studying and analysing them. His different writings are clear proofs in this regard. All these studies and discussions, together with God-given talents and experience, enabled him to express himself in Arabic. [...] He related to me on numerous occasions that he does not like to start talking on a topic without first making sufficient preparation for it. This was not due to paucity of knowledge, rather, it was the caution of a scholar who wishes to have absolute conviction and certainty.[261]

Shaykh ^{3}Abū al-Ḥasan was thoroughly proficient in the Qur^{3}ānic and *ḥadīth* sciences, in respect of understanding, appreciation and practice. He immersed himself in the vast treasures of ^{3}Islāmic literature in the Arabic and Persian languages, his mind was open to other foreign cultures and he closely followed Western academic scholarship. He read all that was available to him for whatever he needed. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī praises the range of his reading and knowledge, so evident in his first major work to have international impact, *Mādhā Khasir al-^{c}Ālam*. He explains:

> This was also clearly displayed in his next book, *Saviours of the ^{3}Islāmic Spirit*, in the first volume, and then the following volumes on the lives of Shaykh al-^{3}Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, ^{3}Imām Sirhindī and ^{3}Imām Dihlawī. And then in his book, *al-Murtaḍā*, on the life of ^{c}Alī ﷺ. He was assisted in all this by his strong academic composition which combined the ancient with the modern, his knowledge of English together with the

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[261] From his introduction to Shaykh ^{3}Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Mādhā Khasir al-^{c}Ālam bi ^{3}Inḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn* (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-^{c}Ālam li al-Kitāb al-^{3}Islāmī, 4th edn. n.d.), p. 21.

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Hindi, Persian and Urdu languages, and his general and special upbringing in a long-established academic environment. His father was ^{c}Allāmah ^{c}Abd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī, the author of *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, which is an encyclopaedia of the lives of Indian *^{c}ulamā$^{\circ}$* and personalities. His mother was from among those distinguished women who had memorised the Qur$^{\circ}$ān, composed poetry, wrote books and collections of poetry. In like manner, he was brought up on the campus of Dār al-^{c}Ulūm Nadwat al-^{c}Ulamā$^{\circ}$ which was a bridge between the dusty past and the present, which adopted the most beneficial of the past and the most wholesome of the present, which combined the rational with the traditional, religion with the world, knowledge with faith, firmness with progress, and the historical with the contemporary.[262]

Overview of his qualities as a *dā^{c}ī*

Taken together, the different qualities of Shaykh $^{\circ}$Abū al-Ḥasan are best summarised in the description of him as an $^{\circ}$imām "who is *rabbānī*, *$^{\circ}$Islāmī*, *Qur$^{\circ}$ānī* and *Muḥammadī*."[263] The term *rabbānī* has no equivalent in English; it describes one who has a learned holiness that is *practised*, for one who is learned but does not practise on his knowledge cannot be called *rabbānī*. Shaykh Nadwī was *$^{\circ}$Islāmī*, in that he lived in and by $^{\circ}$Islām and for $^{\circ}$Islām, in the widest meaning of faith, religion, culture and civilisation. He was *Qur$^{\circ}$ānī*, because the Book of God was his main source and his constant companion both inwardly and outwardly. He recited it and listened to it being recited, he studied and taught it, and he lived by it. Finally, he was *Muḥammadī*, not only in the sense of his genealogical link with the Hāshimī Ḥasanī lineage. There are many Ḥusaynīs and Ḥasanīs whose actions are in direct conflict with their lineage. For, "The one whose deeds have caused him to lag behind will not be advanced by virtue of his lineage."[264] Rather, he was *Muḥammadī* in that he was a man who made the Messenger ﷺ his model in manner, conduct and lifestyle. He adopted his life as a lamp in his worship, abstinence, and aversion from the attractions of life and the adornments of the world. He thus lived among the latter generation (*khalaf*) but led a life of the former generation (*salaf*). He was not concerned with the things people like us are concerned with: possessions, ownership, gardens, attractions, etc. If you were to see him, you would think that he was Salmān al-Fārisī or $^{\circ}$Abū al-Dardā$^{\circ}$ رضي الله عنهما.

[262] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh $^{\circ}$Abī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ^{c}Araftuh*, pp. 73-74.
[263] See *ibid.*, pp. 10-12.
[264] ^{c}Imām Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-Dhikr wa al-Du^{c}ā$^{\circ}$ wa al-Tawbah wa al-$^{\circ}$Istighfār*, b. *Faḍl al-$^{\circ}$Ijtimā^{c} ^{c}alā Tilāwah al-Qur$^{\circ}$ān wa ^{c}alā al-Dhikr*, narrated by $^{\circ}$Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه.

The objectives of his *da^{c}wah*, its sources and methods

In numerous verses of His Book, God commands His Messenger ﷺ to call people to His religion, and He commends the Muslim community because, in contrast to Banī $^{\circ}$Isrā$^{\circ}$īl, the Muslims command to good and prohibit evil. God says to His Messenger ﷺ:

Say, "This is my path; I invite towards God with insight, I and whoever is with me - glory be to God! - I do not join other with Him" (*Sūrah Yūsuf*, 12: 108).

"Continue inviting them to your Lord; surely you are on the straight path of perception" (*Sūrat al-Ḥajj*, 22: 67).

"Call towards your Lord and do not be of the associators" (*Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28: 87).

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and kind admonition, and argue with them in a way that is best" (*Sūrat al-Naḥl*, 16: 125).

"Whose speech is better than he who invited to God, and did good deeds, and said, 'I am from among the obedient ones'" (*Sūrah Ḥā Mīm al-Sajdah/al-Fuṣṣilat*, 41: 33).

"There should be among you a group that continually invites to good, and continually commands good deeds, and forbids evil, and it is they who are successful" (*Sūrah $^{\circ}$Āl ^{c}Imrān*, 3: 104).

"You are the best of all nations which has been sent to the world - you enjoin good and forbid evil" (*Sūrah $^{\circ}$Āl ^{c}Imrān*, 3: 110).

"They [of the Banī $^{\circ}$Isrā$^{\circ}$īl] would not prevent one another from the evil which they committed; how evil is that which they were doing" (*Sūrat al-Mā$^{\circ}$idah*, 5: 79).

"Why do their monks and rabbis not prohibit them from uttering sinful things and consuming the prohibited? Evil indeed is what they have been doing." (*Sūrat al-Mā$^{\circ}$idah*, 5: 63).

Al-Bukhārī narrates in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from $^{\circ}$Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه that on the day of sacrifice during the Farewell Pilgrimage the Prophet ﷺ said, "Let the one who is present convey this message to the one who is absent [...] It may well be that the person who is present will convey it to a person who has a better understanding than himself."[265]

The Prophet ﷺ also said, "Convey what I say even if it is a single verse. And there is no harm in relating from the Banī Isrā$^{\circ}$īl. Whoever consciously fabricates a lie against me is preparing his abode in the Fire."[266]

[265] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-Ḥajj*, b. *al-Khuṭbah $^{\circ}$Ayyām Minā*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-Qasāmah*, b. *Taghliz Taḥrīm al-Dimā$^{\circ}$*.
[266] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *$^{\circ}$Aḥādīth al-$^{\circ}$Anbiyā$^{\circ}$*, b. *Mā Dhukhir ^{c}an Banī $^{\circ}$Isrā$^{\circ}$īl*.

The objectives of his *da^{c}wah*

Absolute monotheism

Absolute monotheism is the core of the *da^{c}wah* of the Prophets ﷺ. Shaykh $^{\circ}$Abū al-Ḥasan made it the foundation and starting point of his *da^{c}wah* effort.

The first call and greatest objective of the Prophets ﷺ in every era and environment was: correcting the beliefs in God, correcting the relationship between man and his Lord, inviting to devotion in religion, worshipping God alone, believing that He alone has the power to give profit and loss, and that He alone is eligible for worship, prayer, supplication and sacrifice.

Their attack was concentrated and directed towards the paganism established in their eras, a paganism which was clearly demonstrated in their worship of idols, statues, and holy people, both dead and alive. The people of ignorance believed that God placed the garment of honour and divinity on these idols, gave them powers over certain affairs, and accepted intercession from them unconditionally. They believed that He was like the king of kings who despatches kings to different regions and empowers them to rule there in all matters with the exception of certain major matters.

Whoever has some contact with the Qur$^{\circ}$ān, which enjoys authority over all past books, knows instinctively and clearly that putting an end to paganism, rejecting it, fighting it, and saving people from its clutches was the fundamental objective of prophethood, the purpose behind the commissioning of Prophets ﷺ, the peak of their deeds, the object of their effort, and the nucleus of their lives and *da^{c}wah*. They revolved around this nucleus, issued from it, returned to it, started from it and ended with it. The Qur$^{\circ}$ān repeatedly mentions this concisely, "We did not send any Messenger before you without sending the order to him that none has the right to be worshipped except Me, so worship Me" (*Sūrat al-$^{\circ}$Anbiyā$^{\circ}$*, 21: 25). At times God emphasises this point, mentioning one Prophet after another, commencing his *da^{c}wah* with the call to monotheism.[267]

Shaykh $^{\circ}$Abū al-Ḥasan was aware that *shirk* (polytheism) manifested itself in different forms in different ages:

> *Shirk* is not confined to considering someone equal to God and believing the two to be equal without any distinction. Rather, the essence of *shirk* entails man attributing to another qualities and actions that God has reserved for Himself, and making them a feature of worship of that other. For example: prostrating before, slaughtering an animal in its name, taking a vow in its name, asking for its help at times of difficulty, believing that it is omnipresent, and believing that it has hidden powers. *Shirk* is established by any of these beliefs and actions, and man becomes a *mushrik* by committing them. This is still the case even if he believes that this human, angel or *jinn* to whom he prostrates, for whom he is slaughtering, in whose name he is making an oath and whom he is asking for help, is lower than God, has a lesser power than Him, and even if He believes that God alone is the Creator, and this other is His servant and creature. There is no difference if this is the Prophets ﷺ, the *$^{\circ}$awliyā$^{\circ}$*, the *jinn,* the devils or demons. Whoever believes in them in this manner is a *mushrik*. It is for this reason that God applied the same description to the Jews and Christians - who committed excesses in their relationship with their rabbis and monks - that He applied to the idol worshippers and *mushrikīn*. God displayed His anger to these deviated fanatics just as He did to the deviated *mushrikīn*. God says, "They took their rabbis and monks as lords, to the exclusion of God, and they also worshipped the Messiah, the son of Maryam, though they were ordered to worship one God alone. None is worthy of worship but He. He is pure from what they associate" (*Sūrat al-Tawbah*, 9: 31).
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> [...] We have to point out the illnesses which are prevalent among the ignoramuses, those who have submitted to foreign influences, ignorant customs, who grew up in environments which are remote from correct $^{\circ}$Islāmic education, knowledge of the Qur$^{\circ}$ān and Sunnah, and invite them to the pure religion. We will have to place our hand and stethoscope on the places of illness in the sick body.
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> Comprehensive and all-encompassing knowledge, absolute will and total power are among the peculiarities of God. The devotional practices like prostrating, bowing, fasting, pilgrimage to a place and honouring it as one ought to honour the Sanctified House (al-Ka^{c}bah), taking sacrificial animals to such a place, and taking oaths there are all polytheistic practices and manifestations.
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Following the Sunnah

Wilāyah, friendship or nearness to God, is strongly related to following the Sunnah. Shaykh $^{\circ}$Abū al-Ḥasan said, "This station commences with following the Sunnah and ends with perfection in following the Sunnah."[269] He argued that the Sunnah, remembered and recorded in *ḥadīth*, had an essential role in supervising the community, "Whoever examines $^{\circ}$Islāmic history will know

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The objectives of his *daᶜwah*

Absolute monotheism

Absolute monotheism is the core of the *daᶜwah* of the Prophets ﷺ. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan made it the foundation and starting point of his *daᶜwah* effort.

The first call and greatest objective of the Prophets ﷺ in every era and environment was: correcting the beliefs in God, correcting the relationship between man and his Lord, inviting to devotion in religion, worshipping God alone, believing that He alone has the power to give profit and loss, and that He alone is eligible for worship, prayer, supplication and sacrifice.

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that were it not for the protected Sunnah and *ḥadīth*, keeping ʾIslāmic society in check would not have been possible. The reformers and revivers of every time and place would not have differentiated between the Sunnah and innovation (*bidᶜah*), truth and falsehood, and good and evil. The *ʾaḥadīth* are thus an eternal and continuous *madrasah* from which reformers and revivers qualify. It is a compelling force moving ahead, obliging one to carry the responsibilities of *daᶜwah* and supervision."[270]

God commanded the Muslims to follow the example of His Messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ, and He enabled that command through the community's preserving in great detail its memory of his words and deeds, and the events surrounding him ﷺ. This was most necessary as the Qurʾān expressly stated that the religion has been perfected and Prophethood sealed. If people understand this clearly, they can be saved from the error of exaggerating the status of certain individuals:

> There is no doubt that the commissioning of a prophet after the Last, even if not sent with a new Law, is in contradiction to divine wisdom [...] It is obvious that such a prophet would constitute a barrier between the community and its first Prophet ﷺ whether he likes it or not, and the community's bond with the first Prophet ﷺ will be consciously or unconsciously weakened. This is the nature of things and characteristic of humans.
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> The belief of *ʾImāmat* which is held by the Shīᶜah has affected the bond of this sect with the Prophet ﷺ. The feeling of love, affection, fervour and zeal has been directed to their Twelve *ʾAʾimmah*. This is obvious in the fields of writing [...] and in undertaking arduous journeys to their holy sites. Affection towards the *ʾAʾimmah* and love for ᶜAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ﷺ and his son al-Ḥusayn ﷺ has become the salient feature and hallmark of this sect. It has filled every vacuum in belief, affection and love. What, then, can be said of a prophet who is commissioned to this or any other nation in any era! Will love for him and rallying under his flag not compete with the love of the community for its Prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ, with everything that is connected to him, the teachings which are attributed to him, his ways and mannerisms, his Companions ﷺ, his language and arts, his history and civilisation?
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Calling people to the Sunnah is therefore also, necessarily, moving them away from innovation, from introducing new things into religion (*bidᶜah*). Shaykh Nadwī defined *bidᶜah* very carefully:

> An innovation is defined as, entering something into the religion that was not entered by God and His Messenger ﷺ, which they did not order to be entered, and believing that [new] matter to be part of the religion so that it is acted upon in expectation of reward, and certain manners and assumed prerequisites are adhered to, as is done for an order of the Sharīᶜah.
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> *Bidᶜah* is a fabricated Sharīᶜah in opposition to divine Sharīᶜah. It has its own jurisprudence, its own compulsory, obligatory, *Sunnah* and preferred acts equal to the divine Sharīᶜah at times, and surpassing it in importance and honour at other times.
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ʾImām Mālik spoke excellently when he said, "Whoever introduces into ʾIslām an innovation which he considers to be good has in fact claimed the Muḥammad ﷺ did not fulfil the trust of his messengership, as God says, 'Today I have perfected for you your religion' (*Sūrat al-Māʾidah*, 5: 3). So whatever was not considered to be a part of religion on that day cannot be a part of religion today."[273]

Calling people to the Sunnah is also a call to unity, consistency, solidarity, and ease in religion:

> If a Muslim from one region of the ʾIslāmic world travels to another region, he experiences no difficulty and hardship in practising ʾIslām and applying the Sharīᶜah. He does not need a special course or a local guide.
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> As for innovations, there is no consistency and harmony among them. They melt in the local melting-pot of every place, they are minted in the mint of a city or place. They are products of specific local historical factors, personal interest and specific personal motives. The innovations of each country are peculiar to that country. In fact, the innovations of each province and city are peculiar to that place. In fact, the innovations, customs and fabrications of each district and each house are peculiar to that place. From this medley, you get a religion which is contradicting, each one in conflict with the other in every village and country, and in every district and house.
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> It is because of these eternal comprehensive benefits, some of which we know without having encompassed all of them, that the Messenger ﷺ forbade any approach to innovations. He ordered the people to abstain from every innovation in religion, to safeguard the Sunnah and to adhere to it. The Messenger ﷺ said, "Whoever introduces something into our religion which is not of it, then it is rejected."[274] "Beware of

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introducing new things into the religion because every new thing is an innovation, and every innovation is deviation."[275] Listen to this wise prophesy, "When a nation introduces an innovation, a Sunnah similar to it is taken away from them."[276]

Shaykh $^{\flat}$Abū al-Ḥasan often dwelt on the efforts of the distinguished scholars and reformers of the past against innovations in the religion. The Qur$^{\flat}$ān itself had warned against those who give themselves authority over the religion, "O believers! Many of the rabbis and monks of the People of the Book devour the wealth of the people wrongfully and they hinder [others] from the path of God" (*Sūrat al-Tawbah*, 9: 34). Naturally, this *jihād* was met with opposition from the people, masses and elite alike, who levelled the same accusations against them as the *mushrikīn* of Quraysh levelled against the first Muslims, accusations such as, "people have abandoned the religion of their forefathers" or saying that they were, "people who have left the religion" and that the early Muslims were, "people who are enemies of the religion". But these reformers did not bother about such name-calling and continued their struggle through the spoken and written word. They continued establishing the truth, and exposing the falsehood of the many innovations and fabrications that now no longer exist and are only mentioned in books of history. As for the innovations that do still exist, the distinguished *^{c}ulamā$^{\flat}$* are still fighting to put an end to them. God says, "Of the believers are men who have been true to the covenant they made with God; some of them have fulfilled their obligation and some of them are still waiting, without having changed their resolve in the least" (*Sūrat al-$^{\flat}$Aḥzāb*, 33: 23).[277]

Purification of the soul

Purification of the soul and rectification of character are among the primary objectives of the religion, God says:

"As We have sent to you a Messenger from among yourselves who recites to you Our verses and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know" (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2: 151).

"God bestowed a favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves - he recites to them His verses and purifies them [from *shirk* and other evils], and teaches them the Book and Wisdom. And previously they were in manifest error" (*Sūrah $^{\flat}$Āl ^{c}Imrān*, 3: 164).

"It is He who raised among the unlettered people a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and Wisdom, and before this they were clearly astray" (*Sūrat al-Jumu^{c}ah*, 62: 2).

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[275] Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad* (Riyadh: Makabat al-Ma^{c}ārif, 1982), vol. 4, p. 105.
[276] Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, b. *Ḥibā^{c} sunnat al-Khulafā$^{\flat}$ al-Rāshidīn al-Mahdiyyīn*. $^{\flat}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *al-^{c}Aqīdah wa al-^{c}Ibādah wa al-Sulūk*, pp. 91-94.
[277] *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

Fundamentally, purification of the soul is the discipline of re-orienting an individual's dispositions, will and energy away from desiring and doing what the ego wants, towards desiring and doing what pleases God, in sum, performing His will, not ones own. The disciplining process, begun and sustained by the individual's assent, trains one into seeing the comforts and pleasures of this world, and its fears and anxieties, not as ends in and of themselves but as means to securing well-being in the hereafter. In his assemblies, Shaykh Nadwī had a wonderful ability to connect people to the hereafter, make appealing to them the deeds that are done for the sake of the hereafter, and make insignificant in their eyes what is done to secure the necessities or refinements of this life. He used to say:

We must accept the rectification of character and purification of the soul in order to divest it of faults and adorn it with virtues. This is because vile characteristics are heavy veils which prevent one from deriving benefit from Prophetic teachings and absorbing the colour of God. It is these vile characteristics which make man a target of the egotistical soul and a toy of Satan and expose him to danger and destruction. The Qur$^{\flat}$ān says, "Look at the one who has made his own lust his deity" (*Sūrat al-Jāthiyah*, 45: 23). We must submit to the criteria of the Qur$^{\flat}$ān, Sunnah and Prophetic teachings, and impose them upon our soul and character.

Most of us, for the majority of the time, cannot in self-reflection see more than our face in the mirror. Fortunate indeed is the one:

Who is able to see the weak points in himself, and the moral illnesses which he has, such as pride, jealousy, greed, avarice, covetousness, malice, spite, love for the world, excessive love for wealth, looking down on a fellow-Muslim; and then is able to occupy himself in trying to remove these illnesses and free himself from them. He strives in this cause just as he strives to acquire something which he does not have. A fortunate person is he who finds a proficient mentor who apprises him of his illnesses, describes to him ways to cure himself, makes the path easy for him, transferring his light to him, and whose justice to himself and to others has an impact on him, who is particularly concerned with his own appraisal, and who himself is fearful of God.[278]

The state of the *$^{\flat}$ummah* was a constant concern to Shaykh Nadwī; the kind of mentor just described was all too rare and those in need of such mentoring were all too many:

It is an incurable spiritual and moral malady, and one of the most crushing problems of society for which there is no solution. The masses and common people are targets of reckless materialism, blind greed for wealth, possessing social and moral ills. The educated class, whether religiously or secularly educated, are targets of greed for name and fame, and internal illnesses like jealousy, avarice, ostentation, pride, selfishness, love of fame, hypocrisy, dissimulation, and subservience to wealth and power. Social and political organisations are pervaded by selfish ulterior motives,

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[278] *Ibid.*, pp. 208-09.

absence of purification of the self, and the weakness of leaders. Institutions are corrupted by disputes, dissension, irresponsibility, and excessive concern for wealth and increased income. The authority of the *^{c}ulamā^{ɔ}* has been weakened by them giving too much importance to appearances, having too great a fear of becoming poor and of the wrath of the elite and masses, and their excessive habituation to a life of indulgence and comfort. The only treatment for all this is the Prophetic purification (*tazkiyah*), which the Qur^{ɔ}ān spoke about and for which the Messenger ﷺ was sent.[279]

The unity and comprehensiveness of ^{ɔ}Islām

Shaykh ^{ɔ}Abū al-Ḥasan affirmed that ^{ɔ}Islām is an indivisible whole which, in its unity, is not in need of invention, immunisation or compromise to cope with the demands of modern times. The madāris have a special responsibility in this regard, "One of the responsibilities most incumbent on these ^{ɔ}Islāmic *madāris* at present is that they must protect the religion with all its parts so there is no deficiency in the understanding, expression and portrayal of it, so that its roots are not shaken."[280]

Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī clarifies in a very sagacious manner that Shaykh ^{ɔ}Abū al-Ḥasan did not oppose ^{ɔ}Islāmic organisations that were working to establish ^{ɔ}Islāmic rule, building an ^{ɔ}Islāmic society, and recreating a true, comprehensive and balanced ^{ɔ}Islāmic life. It is only ambition for political power as an end in itself, and the narrowness of what *political* meant to some groups, that made him uneasy. Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī says:

> He believed in these objectives and his view in this regard is clear. He wrote about them for a long time, starting with his book, *Mādhā Khasir al-^{c}Ālam*, continuing with the book, *al-Ṣirā^{c} Bayn al-Fikrah al-^{ɔ}Islāmiyyah wa al-Fikrah al-Gharbiyyah*, and ending with the many booklets which he devoted to this subject.
>
> One should therefore not assume that the Shaykh was from among those who rejected striving for ^{ɔ}Islāmic rule or rejected political activity. […] This would be a great injustice to him and would entail including him among those who say, 'Religion has nothing to do with politics, and politics has nothing to do with religion' He is most certainly innocent of this charge.[281]

Combating materialism and the ideology behind it

One of Shaykh ^{ɔ}Abū al-Ḥasan's greatest ideological contributions and struggles was his convincing refutation of agnostic Western philosophy and the ideas and systems built around it. The biggest problem facing the ^{ɔ}Islāmic world is that they have become targets of the ideologies and tendencies of the West, which sought, in the name of reason, science, and civilisation, to turn Muslims away

[279] ^{ɔ}Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Rabbāniyya lā Rahbāniyyah*, pp. 15-16.
[280] ^{ɔ}Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *al-Nabī al-Khātam wa al-Dīn al-Kāmil* (Lucknow: al-Majma^{c} al-^{ɔ}Islāmī al-^{c}Ilmī, 1987), p. 40.
[281] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ^{ɔ}Abī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ^{c}Araftuh*, p. 121.

from divine revelation and towards criteria and aspirations that are strictly worldly and materialistic.

Shaykh Nadwī distinguished himself in his resistance to the Western cultural assault. He identified the contemporary materialistic civilisation as a modern *jāhiliyyah* and was especially alert to its danger in the fields of education, upbringing, culture, values and traditions.

He abhorred the position of those who follow the West blindly in good and evil without distinction. He also abhorred the position of those who reject the West outright, also blindly, and try to cut themselves off from its influence by rejecting it all, without investigating and understanding its intellectual and material achievements. He himself followed a middle position; to take from Western civilisation whatever is in agreement with ^{ɔ}Islāmic beliefs and values, and reject what is not. That was, for him, one of the reasons for his attraction to the poetry of ^{ɔ}Iqbāl, because ^{ɔ}Iqbāl was an outspoken critic of a materialistic civilisation and had conducted a profound and extensive study of it. This is clear in many of Shaykh Nadwī's books and articles, especially: *Speaking to the West, What Did the World Lose, The Conflict between ^{ɔ}Islāmic Ideology and Western Ideology, Speaking Frankly in America*, and his lectures in Oxford, *^{ɔ}Islām and Knowledge* (1987/1407 AH) and *Mankind's Debt to the Prophet Muḥammad* ﷺ (1989/1409 AH).

Combating ideological apostasy and jāhilī fanaticism

Shaykh Nadwī saw Qādiyānism is a religious, and not just a cultural, apostasy. After his extensive reading he became convinced that it was part and parcel of the wider antagonism to ^{ɔ}Islām coming from the West, in the form of Zionism, Communism, Atheism and Colonialism, "The most dangerous aspect of Qādiyānism is that it is a call for an independent religion, and a nation in opposition to the ^{ɔ}Islāmic nation. The *^{c}ulamā^{ɔ}* who undertook to refute it in the beginning were not aware of some of its most dangerous aspects because the Qādiyānī books were not fully accessible at that time."[282]

One of his most popular and oft-reprinted books is *Riddah wa lā ^{ɔ}Abā Bakr lahā* (An apostasy and no ^{ɔ}Abū Bakr to stand against it). It set out the history of this apostasy and caused a tremor in the hearts of those Arab *^{c}ulamā^{ɔ}* still concerned with religious issues. He showed how deeply Arab writers, *^{c}ulamā^{ɔ}* and litterateurs had been dazzled by the ideology, philosophy, way of life and civilisation of the West:

> I feel that the school of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-^{ɔ}Afghānī influenced the styles and ways of thinking of Arab writers. When they delve into politics and criticise colonialism, they are daring brave and attacking critics, fearing neither imprisonment nor banishment nor torture nor threats. But when they approach Western civilisation, political systems, economic philosophies, and civil sciences, their pens become

[282] ^{ɔ}Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *al-Nabī al-Khātam wa al-Dīn al-Kāmil*, pp. 32-33.

exhausted, their tongues begin to stutter and their manner becomes weak. In fact, it becomes clear from their writings that the West is for them the highest model in everything, and that the criterion for rising prosperity is to gain proximity to this goal and to emulate it.[283]

Shaykh Nadwī particularly targeted one form of the betrayal of $^{?}$Islāmic faith, values and history, namely Arab nationalism. He saw it as a revival of *jāhilī* tribalism after God had honoured His people with $^{?}$Islāmic brotherhood, universal faith, and liberated them from everything that leads to killing and dying for one's tribe. What pained him most was that this ideology should have rooted itself among the Arabs who were the first people of $^{?}$Islām, the bearers of its message, the guardians of its Book and its Sunnah. No doubt, he was an Arab in lineage, thinking and spirit, and such a relapse therefore pained him all the more. The ideology of nationalism split the ranks of the Muslims. Among some Arabs it was used as a new religion, to rally the Arabs around certain ideas, concepts and values quite distant from what Muḥammad ﷺ had been sent with and by which God had guided the Arab peoples, united them and taken them from darkness into light.

Despite his rejection of Arab nationalism, Shaykh Nadwī did not dispute the merit of the Arabs and the leading role that they had played in ensuring that $^{?}$Islāmic history was indeed $^{?}$Islāmic. Rather, in innumerable lectures, articles and booklets, he affirmed that leadership and he called the Arabs back to that which it had been, and must again become, alongside the motive and means of their greatness in the world.

Reviving the spirit of sacrifice

Another objective of Shaykh Nadwī's *da^{c}wah* was to revive the spirit of *jihād* in the cause of God. The *da^{c}wah* of God's Messenger ﷺ was not restricted to correct and complete understanding of the rights of God, nor to those acts of worship, both inward and outward, that bring one closer to God. "Rather, together with all this, *jihād* was one of the special traits of his religion, pillars of his *da^{c}wah* and the most beloved of acts in his sight."[284]

The *spirit of jihād* is not an abstraction; it entails preparation of body, mind and spirit. Thus, we find Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan lamenting the decline of horsemanship among the Arabs, a skill at which they had been such masters, "It was one of the causes of their weakness and incapability in the field of *jihād*. The military spirit became dim, the bodies became weak, and people grew up in indulgence […] It is therefore very important for educators and leaders of Arab populations to train Arab youth in horsemanship, military life, simplicity

[283] $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, p. 136.
[284] $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *al-^{c}Aqīdah wa al-^{c}Ibādah wa al-Sulūk*, pp. 125-26.

in livelihood, a rugged lifestyle, bravery, the bearing of hardships and difficulties, and exercising patience over dislikes."[285]

Shaykh Nadwī reminded the $^{?}$Islāmic universities of their responsibilities in education and training, "You must prepare youth who devote their lives to the service of the $^{?}$*ummah*, who are prepared to sacrifice, who relish hunger more than they relish sumptuous foods, drinks and the luxuries of life. They must relish asceticism more than materialism. They must spend their time and energies, their intellectual talents, and their academic capital which their universities provided to them, in order to elevate the $^{?}$Islāmic community, to raise thereby the word of God, and to produce a community which bears a message, and to build a country which inspires authority and awe."[286]

The universality of his da^{c}wah

Shaykh Nadwī was a *dā^{c}ī* of international disposition who crossed national and regional boundaries in his efforts to inform, reform and unite Muslims. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī says:

> As for the fact that he was an *international* personality, this is perceived by anyone who follows the activities of the Shaykh. Although he was born, brought up and educated in India, he had an international direction and purpose, as well as international activity and movement. Although he was concerned about the Muslims of India, whom he joined in their worries and was at times at the forefront, as was the case with Muslim personal law when the Indian government wanted to impose restrictions on it and thereby deprive it of its identity. The Shaykh's concern and activities were not confined to the Indian subcontinent. Rather, it extended to the entire world. We therefore see that his popularity in the Arab world was no less than what it was in India. We see that he was a member of many committees and institutes, for example, the Founding Committee of the Muslim World League, the Higher International Assembly for Masājid, the International Fiqh Academy, the Royal Academy for $^{?}$Islāmic Civilisation Research in Jordan and the Arabic Language Academy in Damascus. It was he who initiated the establishment of the Centre for $^{?}$Islāmic Studies in Oxford so that it may be a source of $^{?}$Islāmic thought in a long-standing Western university, he was also the chairman of the Board of Trustees of this Centre. He also took a part in the establishment of the League for $^{?}$Islāmic Literature so that it may be an international platform for $^{?}$Islāmic litterateurs, and was the chairman from its inception. The person who reads the titles of the lectures, articles and speeches of Shaykh Nadwī, irrespective of where they were delivered and to whom they were addressed, will clearly recognise this universality. Among these are: *Speaking to the*

[285] $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Mādhā Khasir al-^{c}Ālam bi $^{?}$Inḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn* (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-^{c}Ālam li al-Kitāb al-$^{?}$Islāmī, 4th edn. n.d.), p. 286.
[286] $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Dawr al-Jāmi^{c}āt al-$^{?}$Islāmiyyah al-Maṭlūb* (Lucknow: al-Majma^{c} al-$^{?}$Islāmī al-^{c}Ilmī, 1987), p. 33. Also see, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh $^{?}$Abī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ^{c}Araftuh*, p. 83.

Arabs, Speaking Frankly in America, Listen, O Egypt!, Listen, O Flower of the Desert!, Listen, O Iran!...etc."[287]

An account of the universality of his *da^{c}wah* must include his efforts to reach out to non-Muslims. The Messenger of God ﷺ said, "If God guides a single person through you, it will be better for you than red camels."[288] Shaykh Nadwī was active in this sphere from a young age. After his efforts with Dr $^{\circ}$Ambedkar which we have mentioned, he set up the organisation *Message to Humanity* which worked conscientiously to introduce $^{\circ}$Islām to non-Muslims in India.

Shaykh Nadwī held that the excellence of the $^{\circ}$Islāmic community over others lies in its fulfilling the obligation to call people to God. Humanity today, notwithstanding its scientific knowledge and the expression of that knowledge in economic and technological power, is most in need of that call, just as a thirsty person is in need of water.

The framework of his *da^{c}wah*

Shaykh Nadwī relied on the Qur$^{\circ}$ān for his *da^{c}wah*. It is the source from which the essentials and injunctions of religion derive, whether beliefs, rulings or values. He considered the light of prophethood to be above that of reason. Reason is not safe from stumbling if it travels life's path unassisted by divine light. There can be no reliance at all on different philosophies to guide us to a correct understanding of divinity, the universe, man and life. In fact, even religious philosophy or scholastic theology went astray insofar as it travelled without the light of the revealed religion. Some scholastic theologians like al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, al-$^{\circ}$Āmidī and others, and some great philosophers, testified to the limits of reason. Needless to say, the *enlightened* reason of Europe has not and will not lead humankind to any safe place where the heart can find peace. Shaykh Nadwī affirmed that "we have to remain constantly attached to the fountain of guidance and instruction, the Qur$^{\circ}$ān, and the way of the Messenger ﷺ, his noble Companions رضي الله عنهم and their great followers."[289] As we will see below, Shaykh Nadwī also turned frequently to sources which had drunk from that fountain, to the writings of $^{\circ}$Islāmic scholars and poets.

The Qur$^{\circ}$ān

The Qur$^{\circ}$ān was Shaykh $^{\circ}$Abū al-Ḥasan's primary source for his *da^{c}wah* and he turned to it constantly to learn the methods, styles, courses and means

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[288] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *Faḍā'il $^{\circ}$Aṣḥāb al-Nabī*, b. *Manāqib ^{c}Alī ibn Abī Tālib*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *Faḍā'il Ṣaḥbāh*, b. *Faḍā'il ^{c}Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*.
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of *da^{c}wah* exemplified in the stories of the Prophets عليهم السلام. Indeed, the reason for the Qur$^{\circ}$ān's presentation of these stories is so that we may emulate the Prophets, learn from their situations, exercise patience as they did, invite as they did, and be consoled when we face the same opposition.

He used Qur$^{\circ}$ānic verses to begin and anchor his lectures and speeches, he looked to it for themes and ideas, and when he heard the Book recited, he would say, "I know that they are verses addressing me before addressing others, and that they were chosen for me." Of the Qur$^{\circ}$ān in general he said, "I am indebted to this mighty Book for my education, reflection, writings, investigations, books, general speeches, and academic lectures to a degree unparalleled by any other book, academic study, intellectual school, or literature of different languages and cultures. The books and speeches which I was inspired to write and deliver bear testimony to this."[290]

I cite here one example of how he took inspiration from the Qur$^{\circ}$ān. This is a lecture he gave at the ^{c}Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb Masjid in Sharjah on Wednesday 23rd November 1983 (17th Ṣafar 1404 AH):

> I seek refuge in God from Satan the cursed one, "Why were there not in the generations before you such people in whom there remained a remnant of virtue forbidding corruption in the land, except a few of them whom We saved. While the unjust pursued the enjoyment of luxury, and persisted in sin" (*Sūrah Hūd*, 11: 116).
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> Respected elders and brothers! This is a verse from *Sūrah Hūd*. Every time I recite this verse, I get goose-bumps and I am overcome by emotions. This verse is in an effective Qur$^{\circ}$ānic style, I cannot find an expression which would fulfil the right of this verse. God says, "Why were there not in the generations before you such people in whom there remained a remnant of virtue." The words "people in whom there remained a remnant of virtue" cannot be expressed and explained completely. In other words, when corruption spread in a certain part of the world, as it had in the sixth century of the Christian era during the international *jāhiliyyah* and which cannot be better described than, "Corruption has spread on land and sea on account of what the peoples' hands have earned, so that He may make them taste some part of the consequence of what they have done, so that they may return" (*Sūrat al-Rūm*, 30: 41), why, then, were there not such people in whom there remained a remnant of virtue forbidding corruption?
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[288] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *Faḍā^{3}il ^{3}Aṣḥāb al-Nabī*, b. *Manāqib ^{c}Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *Faḍā^{3}il Ṣaḥbāh*, b. *Faḍā^{3}il ^{c}Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*.
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people are given this description, and what the difference is between them and the rest of the people, the pen will be insufficient, the tongue will be rendered incapable, and the book will never come to an end.

Respected brothers! Humanity was and still is a target of destructive and corrupt factors. Some of these factors are internal: lust, selfishness, conceitedness, love for pleasures, short-sightedness, hankering after the world, submitting to matter and power, and to deviated forces. Then there are external factors: a corrupt environment and society, bad education and upbringing, deviation from laws and systems.

Man lives in the real world; he does not live in dreams and hopes, he does not live in philosophies and fantasies. He walks on his feet and breathes in air. If the air is polluted, he will inhale polluted air. If the air is decayed, he will inhale decay. If the air is virtuous and pure, he will inhale virtue and purity. A general spread of moral decay and social corruption should not be considered surprising if there are supervening factors for the corruption of a particular society. This has occurred thousands of times, and will continue to do so if there is time and if the world is given a long life.

However, it is determined that there have to be righteous dispositions, vibrant consciences, illumined minds, firmly established beliefs and strong effective *daᶜwah*. There has to be reliance on the successors of the Prophets ﷺ, the bearers of the message and the lamps of light. It is not something strange for a person to fall ill. Nor is this terrifying or a cause for desperation. But what is terrifying and desperate is the absence of a doctor. This is what the divine religions warned against. The Prophets ﷺ, especially the Messenger ﷺ warned against the absence of doctors. They warned against the absence of personal pain on seeing corruption; and the absence of someone who would stand up to it face to face; who would stand before it like a strong barrier and mighty mountain which never quakes. Corruption spreads and there is nothing to combat it. Corruption spreads and there is no one to challenge it. Corruption spreads and there is no one to refute it and abhor it. That is the real calamity. This is what destined the human caravan to the Fire of Hell and destruction, to ruin and annihilation. This is what caused corruption to spread throughout human society.

Shaykh Nadwī continues in this manner, explaining the matter at length, and ends the lecture by saying:

We are on the ship of humanity and the ship is in a state of turbulence. It is our duty to think of ways to convey it to the shore of safety. And the only shore of safety is true and perfect ʾIslām, which is far from hypocrisy, far from all the marks of *jāhiliyyah*. It is an ʾIslām which is vibrant with vitality and power, which bears a special message, the message of mercy towards humanity, which possesses the greatest ideals, righteous examples, and excellent role models for individuals and societies, lands and peoples, organisations and governments. All inspiration is from God alone.[291]

The Sunnah

After the Qurʾān, Shaykh Nadwī relied upon the Sunnah, the *ḥadīth*, and *sīrah* of the Prophet ﷺ. He did so with the conviction that the Sunnah is an explanation of the Qurʾān, its practical embodiment, on account of the famous

[291] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *ʾAḥādīth Ṣarīḥah maᶜ al-ʾIkhwāninā al-ᶜArab wa al-Muslimīn* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1987), pp. 50-61.

aphorism, "His character was the Qurʾān."[292] It is important to think and live in the environment of the Sunnah, to take guidance from it and adopt it in practice, it is not enough to approve it theoretically or just talk about it. Shaykh Nadwī was gravely concerned by the decline in affection for the Prophet ﷺ among Muslims and their weak spiritual bond with him. It was to stir the love for the Prophet ﷺ that, nevertheless, abides in the heart of every Muslim, even those whose practice as Muslims is very defective. For this reason, he wrote *The Road to Madīnah* and other books. He says:

The blessed life of the Prophet ﷺ, his directives and his teachings create that atmosphere in which the tree of religion grows lush, bears leaves and produces fruit.

Religion is not a collection of dry moral principles. It cannot remain alive without sentiments, incidents and practical examples. The best reliable collection of these sentiments, incidents and practical examples is the collection of *ḥadīth* which has become one of the hallmarks of the ʾIslāmic community.[293]

ʾIslāmic history

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan looked to ʾIslāmic history as a sort of diary of the community, a treasury of its great achievements. He derived much from the Companions ﷺ, the Tābiᶜūn who came after them, and then all those whose lives and works exemplified ʾIslām. However, his use of history was not confined to the early generations alone, nor indeed only to ʾIslāmic history, Dr ʾAḥmad al-Hulaybī says in this regard:

His work demonstrates a deliberate study of history, and wide knowledge of its various sources which enabled him to benefit from its lessons, and gain inspiration from its examples. He was thus able to utilise his lectures to kindle courage, construct the future, and join it to the past. This gave him a comprehensive view which was not confined to ʾIslāmic history […] but extended to include European and Eastern history. It is a cultural history in which the books of Shaykh Nadwī are intermingled. Very few of his contemporaries enjoyed this excellence. This gave him an investigative power to compare […] to study societies and their development, to identify the facts behind events and to perceive their consequences."[294]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was known for his frequent telling of the story of Ribᶜīy ibn ᶜĀmir. Indeed, he was responsible for giving prominence to it in the presentation of the ʾIslāmic message. It seemed to him to encapsulate the purpose for which the Muslims entered upon the stage of world history, and explain why this purpose gave them the energy to play the role they did. The story, as related by Ibn Kathīr is as follows:

[292] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *Ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn*, b. *Jāmiᶜ Ṣalāt al-Layl*. Narrated by ᶜĀʾishah ﷺ.

[293] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Dawr al-Ḥadīth fī Takwīn al-Manākh al-ʾIslāmī wa Siyānatih*, p. 17.

[294] Dr ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz al-Hulaybī, essay on *al-Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī*, pp. 349-50.

Before the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, Saᶜd sent Ribᶜīy ibn ᶜĀmir as an envoy to Rustam, the commander and leader of the Persian army. Ribᶜīy entered and saw they had decorated Rustam's place of assembly with gilded cushions and carpets. It displayed sapphires, costly pearls and much beauty. Rustam was wearing his crown and various other costly items. He was sitting on a gold couch. Ribᶜīy entered wearing coarse garments, a sword, a shield, and riding a short horse. Ribᶜīy continued riding it until it trod on the edge of the carpet. He then dismounted and tied it to one of those cushions. He walked forward while still wearing his weapons, armour and helmet on his head. The guards said to him, "Remove your weapons."

He said, "I did not come to you of my own accord. I only came as you called me. You either leave me as I am or I will go back."

Rustam said, "Permit him to enter." Ribᶜīy advanced while his spear dragged over the cushions. In so doing, it tore many of them.

Rustam said to him, "Why have you Muslims come here?"

He replied, "God sent us to remove whomever wishes, from the worship of slaves to the worship of God, from the constriction of the world to its expanse and from the injustices of religions to the justice of ʾIslām. He sent us with His religion to His creatures in order to invite them to it. Whoever accepts it, we shall accept it from him and return. Whoever refuses, we shall continue fighting him until we reach the promise of God."

They asked, "What is the promise of God?"

He said, "Paradise for the one who died while fighting the one who refused to embrace ʾIslām, and victory for the one who survived."

Rustam said, "I have heard your speech. Will it be possible for you to defer this matter so that we and you too may ponder it?"

He said, "Yes. How much time do you want, one or two days?"

Rustam said, "No. We need more time so that we can write to our decision makers and the leaders of our nation."

He said, "The Messenger of God did not permit us to give the enemies more than three days respite when we meet them on the battlefield. You should therefore ponder your decision and choose one option within three days."

Rustam asked, "Are you their leader?"

He said, "No. But the Muslims are like a single body. The decision of the lowest among them is accepted by the highest of them."

Rustam then had a meeting with his senior people. He said, "Have you ever heard more honourable and sound speech than this?"

They said, "God forbid, do not be attracted to any of this. Do not leave your religion for this dog. Did you see the clothes he was wearing?"

Rustam said, "Away with you! Do not look at the clothes but look at his intelligence, speech and conduct. The Arabs do not bother about clothing and food, but they are particular about protecting noble descent."[295]

[295] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* (Beirut: Dār ʾIḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ᶜArabī, 1988), vol. 7, pp. 39-40.

ʾIslāmic poetry

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan obtained much inspiration from ʾIslāmic poetry written in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. His attention to ʾIqbāl is well-known from his popular book, *Rawāʾiᶜ ʾIqbāl*. Here, I quote from *The Road to Madīnah* an extract from the chapter *Non-Arab poets in praise of the Messenger* . He imagines a poetry session in which different poets step forward and recite before an assembly of connoisseurs:

The first person to step forward in this session was Shaykh Saᶜdī (d. 1292/691 AH), the author of two timeless books of leading rank in international literature. The two books are *Gulistān* and *Bustān*, two gardens that still flower to this day. The poem he chose to which the heart became attached was a simple flowing poem. It was a unique example of simplicity. It was like an ocean poured into a cup, or an entire library epitomised in a single line. He said, "The unlettered orphan who lived as an unlettered person and never read the Qurʾān was able to replace the libraries of numerous nations. These libraries lost their value and vibrancy. He established a new library which became the source of knowledge and cognition, and the oasis for every inquirer and thirsty person."

He condensed in this poem that revolution which surpasses every revolution past and present in the worlds of religion, morals, sciences, literatures, civilisations, values, and concepts. How was this miracle realised at the hands of an unlettered person who never sat in school for a single day and never put pen to paper? How did this new irreplaceable intellectual era gush forth? How did this intellectual outpouring, before which history submitted, emanate from an absolutely unlettered man who never had the mark of any study or art? This is a puzzle which can only be solved by belief in divine power. This is a strange occurrence. Were it not for continuous narrations from generation to generation, were it not undeniable, were it not for witness accounts, and were it not for the absolute authenticity of the history attesting to it, believing in it would not have been permissible.

Next came Farīd al-Dīn al-ᶜAṭṭār, the author of *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr*, and many other compilations and well-received books. He sang out some poems which flowed with softness and sweetness. They expressed turning to God in repentance, humility and submission, and acknowledgement of ones shortcomings. He requested the intercession of the Messenger and that he should not be disgraced before the world. His statement shook my heart, "He has this right because he was given the same name as his noble name. And it is the norm with honourable people to take into consideration those who have the same name as theirs and to acknowledge this right."[296]

After him came the poet of India, ʾAmīr Khusraw. Iranian poets conferred leadership on him and testified to his excellence and inimitability in Persian poetry and agreed he was among the foremost sons and poets of the Persian language. He attracted the attention and appreciation of his audience for his beautiful composition, melodious voice and sweet tone. One of the things he said was:

[296] His father had named him Muḥammad. He was given the title of Farīd al-Dīn and became known by that title. He died in 1230/627 AH.

"His mere breathing and character infused with life the Arabs who were in the throes of death, and at the same time extinguished the blazing flame of ʾAbū Lahab which almost consumed everything, whether green or dry. The Prophet ﷺ joined two steps between this world and that in a tour from this material world to the spiritual world."[297]

Next came Mawlānā ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, considered to be the greatest poet in ʾIslāmic history in praising the Prophet ﷺ. Lovers, *ᶜulamāʾ* and litterateurs who understood the Persian language sang his poems all over the world. He composed a *qaṣīdah* which spread far and wide, and was very fine in its words and expression. The part that can be translated is:

"O you who are of Arab descent and who have the title of *the unlettered one*! The Arabs and non-Arabs are equally indebted to you and have submitted to your leadership. Your eloquence captivated the Arabs and your elegance captured the hearts of the non-Arabs. The fact that you could neither read nor write did not affect you in any way. It was by virtue of your efforts and appointment as a Prophet that illiterate people came to learn and ignorant people came to excel. The record of deeds became illuminated through you, and your light glowed brightly in the darkness. There is therefore no harm if you did not put pen to paper, or quill to ink."

The audience was enraptured by this eloquent poem and they became ecstatic. They asked the shaykh for more and sang out the old Arabic poem, because the shaykh was an expert in Arabic and one of the *ʾAʾimmah* in grammar and rhetoric. They sang out:

O Saᶜd! You related to us their story and increased our grief.
So tell us more, O Saᶜd!

They asked him to mention the favour and bounty of the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ to the human world. So he said, "Before Muḥammad ﷺ could be commissioned as a Prophet, the Kaᶜbah was filled with idols made of rock. The Sanctified Area (*Ḥaram*), despite its expansiveness, was narrow and restricted for the person seeking God. It was Muḥammad ﷺ who removed these idols, completely destroyed them, erased them, and cast them into the pit of non-existence. It was through him that the Maqām of ʾIbrāhīm returned to its original place and he realised his goal of building the Sanctified House."

The audience appreciated this and knew that the poet travelled to Madīnah on the wings of love, stood on the pedestal of love in the Prophet's *masjid*, and that his love and yearning dictated to him a captivating poem which became proverbial and spread far and wide. The people therefore requested a paragraph from this *qaṣīdah* as if this request was that very thing he desired. It thus inspired his *lyre* so that tunes gushed forth from it. Amongst his recitations was:

"It is my greatest fortune that I reached you. In order to demonstrate my appreciation and acknowledge this bounty, and in order to show my intense love for you, with my eyelids and eyes I swept the dust from your road. I prostrated before God in the *masjid* to show my appreciation. I made myself into a moth encouraging others towards your lustrous light. The cloud of my eyes which had not slept for many hours

297 "...this world and that world" is a reference to the Night Journey and Ascension (*al-ʾIsrāʾ wa al-Miᶜrāj*) of the Messenger ﷺ.

poured forth plentifully. Its water sprayed onto the threshold of your house and grave. I rushed towards your pulpit and wiped my face against its pillars. I stood in your *miḥrāb* and prostrated before God. I washed the place where you placed your foot with the blood of my eyes, not with its tears. I stood before each column and asked God to bless me with the position of the truthful who sent salutations before these columns with sincerity and devotion."

There were some *ᶜulamāʾ* in the audience, who raised their heads at hearing some of these lines and looked disapprovingly at the poet and threateningly at the translator. It seemed they feared the poet had enmeshed himself in saying certain things that are not permissible. So we said, "The poet is firmly embedded in knowledge and has correct belief. This is the language of love and poetry, it is not the language of jurisprudence and theology. These are mere figurative expressions and metaphors, not facts."

This poetry session continued for a long time with Persian and then Urdu poets. All the lines of poetry chosen by Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan were filled with love and yearning, agitating the emotions and evoking anxiety and desire to be close to the Prophet ﷺ.

His methods

God says, "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and kind admonition. And argue with them in a way that is best. Your Lord alone knows best he who has strayed from His path, and He alone knows best those who are on the path" (*Sūrat al-Naḥl*, 16: 125). "Say, 'This is my path. I invite to God with insight, I and whoever is with me'" (*Sūrah Yūsuf*, 12: 108). The components of *daᶜwah* mentioned in these two verses are; wisdom, kind admonition and arguing in a way that is best.

Here wisdom refers to reliance on rational arguments, known to be the first stage of the conversation. Kind admonition is the next stage of the conversation, as it points towards goodness. It is effected through good words and a positive kind manner, remote from negativity and severity. The third stage is arguing "in a way that is best", when the *dāᶜī* must show flexibility, not bigotry and narrow-mindedness. These are the ways that God's Messengers and Prophets ﷺ adopted as exemplified in the Qurʾān, and then by the *duᶜāt* after them in every time and place. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan followed in their footsteps. He was generally calm and collected in speech and only spoke with firmness to correct or prevent a wrong or an offence to the honour of ʾIslām. In such cases, he was quite strong and strict. Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī describes the intellect and wisdom with which God had blessed him, "We therefore find him saying the appropriate words in the appropriate place and at the appropriate time. He could be severe like gushing flood water, but would be soft like free

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flowing water when softness was desired. He was known for this ever since his youth until this day."[298]

$^{?}$Ustādh ^{c}Abd al-Quddūs $^{?}$Abū Ṣāliḥ reports one such occasion at a conference of the World League for $^{?}$Islāmic Literature in Istanbul. During the trip Shaykh Nadwī stayed in the Makkah Hotel. One of the delegates, Najm al-Dīn $^{?}$Arbakhān, came to visit Shaykh Nadwī and spoke of his aspirations, and the goals of his party. He told Shaykh Nadwī that he and his party would win a majority and that when he came to Istanbul after the forthcoming elections, he would find $^{?}$Arbakhān and his party in the seat of power, having defeated their enemies and opponents. As $^{?}$Ustādh ^{c}Abd al-Quddūs recalls:

> The Shaykh saw exaggerated expectations in the speech of $^{?}$Arbakhān, and a view that politics was a game of chance, and a race to gain power. The Shaykh suddenly jumped up like a fierce lion and said to the $^{?}$Islāmic leader, "Your politics cannot remain standing on the basis of profit and loss. Gaining power cannot be used to demonstrate victory nor power, having achieved the glory of rule and deception of authority [...] the matter is far more serious and much greater. You should know that you are only what God conveys you to, and what He has prepared you for. It is your duty to safeguard Istanbul from returning to the army of *kufr*, and to prevent the Hagia Sophia which has become a *masjid* from reverting to a church for the Christians." The Shaykh was speaking with the zeal and awe of the truthful (*ṣiddīqīn*).[299]

Positiveness

Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan did not approve of a combative, argumentative style. He did not use such a style even in his writings that dealt with the Shī^{c}ah and Qādiyāniyyah. He disliked the way of those who called for change by using force and violence to combat the prevailing circumstances. Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan was known for his criticism of some $^{?}$Islāmic movements which made the acquisition of power and governance their primary objective, especially if it entailed using force and violence. He favoured and often referred to the approach of Shaykh $^{?}$Aḥmad Sirhindī, namely seeking to influence and counsel, rather than replace the ruling elite. When asked once in Istanbul, "What, in your opinion, is the best method of $^{?}$Islāmic *da^{c}wah*?" he gave a long answer, the key part of which was:

> If we were to place on one pan of the scale all the effort and time, all the tribulations and imprisonments, and all the blood and tears which $^{?}$Islāmic *da^{c}wah* has spent in the current era; and then we were to look at the other pan of the scale, we will not find equilibrium or anything close to an equilibrium [...] probably the main reason is that the majority working in the field of *da^{c}wah* have set their eyes on reaching the seat of power and government, and removing the ruler on the basis

[298] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh $^{?}$Abī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ^{c}Araftuh*, p. 73.
[299] See $^{?}$Ustādh ^{c}Abd al-Quddūs al-Ṣāliḥ, *Majallāt al-$^{?}$Adab al-$^{?}$Islāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), pp. 13-14.

> that their control of power will enable them to realise their $^{?}$Islāmic goals. [...] But the ruler who binds his course and life to the chair which he has assumed, forgets everything when he perceives a threat to his seat and he seeks the assistance of everything to protect his position which has become his life [...] he will cast aside whatever minor or major commitments he has and strike those who threatened his rule or his life, because for him the seat of power is equivalent to life. If those open to $^{?}$Islām were to convey $^{?}$Islām to those in power while advising them of its benefits, and were to bring them back to $^{?}$Islām in a good way, these *du^{c}āt* will be able to realise many of their goals helping $^{?}$Islām and raising the word of God.[300]

Avoiding dissension

Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan disliked raising issues that would cause Muslims to harbour malice toward each other, cause enmity among them or split their ranks. He felt that the place for debating juridical approaches and doctrines was in the *madāris*, and not the pulpits, assemblies and general meetings. For the same reason, he did not highlight the errors and mistakes of others. Instead, he adhered to the best of $^{?}$Islāmic manners by not probing into private matters and not noticing errors and faults in others. It is always permissible to arrange a private meeting, with no third party present, to give good counsel if that is likely to be accepted. His approach was consistently to work for co-operation and solidarity among Muslims, on the basis of what unites them, as Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī highlights:

> The Shaykh's programme was one of construction, not destruction; towards uniting, not disuniting. He abstained from causing conflict among Muslims. He addressed sensitive issues very delicately, in which his intense wisdom and *speaking in a manner that is best* were manifested. He was blessed with this quality which was rarely found in others. This was because of his forbearing temperament, decorum, sweet character, and his ability to treat difficult problems in a simple and wise manner.[301]

> I compare him to $^{?}$Imām al-Shahīd Ḥasan al-Bannā$^{?}$ who was most desirous of implementing this slogan of his: *We construct and do not destruct, we join and do not separate, we bring closer and do not drive away*. The golden principle of *al-Manār* was, "We co-operate with each other on matters in which we concur, and we excuse each other on matters in which we differ." [...] This was the line of our Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan Nadwī. As far as possible, he kept his distance from stringent styles, injurious expressions and contentious issues. He never started battles around secondary matters and controversial issues.[302]

Utilising the best means

Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan used all means of communication available to him: delivering informal talks in small masājid, formal lectures in large *masājid*,

[300] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[301] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh $^{?}$Abī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ^{c}Araftuh*, p. 63.
[302] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

universities, institutes and at scholarly conventions; publishing articles in newspapers and periodicals; and giving talks on the radio, not to mention his academic teaching, research and administrative duties. It is worth recording that in his view the most important venues for disseminating information about $^{?}$Islām are the *masājid* and educational centres. Accordingly, these institutions should be under the control of just and accommodating people. Regrettably, the opposite remains the case in many instances and in many countries.

When Shaykh Nadwī spoke, his manner of delivery was to give of his entire presence, body, mind and heart, to be fully engaged in attention to the truth with a genuine concern that the audience should understand and act upon what he said. He could not have sustained such a style for a whole lifetime across so many fields of activity without the rhythm and energy that comes from a heart filled with unwavering conviction and love for God, His Messenger ﷺ and His religion. Shaykh al-Ṭanṭāwī said, "If one of the heroes of the past built a fort and commanded an army, $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan built forts for $^{?}$Islām in the hearts of his students, forts which are much stronger and more solid than the forts constructed from rock. He constructed a nation of righteous *^{c}ulamā$^{?}$* and devoted *du^{c}āt*."[303] More particularly of his literary work and his effectiveness in Arabic, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī wrote:

> God blessed him with clear expression and lofty literary skill, as attested by all who read his books and articles. He possessed a literary taste and perception. He was brought up from a very tender age in the lap of Arabic language and literature. God inspired his elder brother to guide him in this direction at a time when no one used to pay attention to it. This was based on some wisdom known to God alone. This God did so that he may be a bridge between the Indian continent and the Arab peoples in order to address them in their language, speaking in an eloquent and fluent language as they do, in fact, surpassing some Arabs who grew up in the heart of Arab lands.[304]

His journeys for *da^{c}wah*

Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan's travelling began in his student years for the sake of knowledge and continued fulfilment of his duties as a teacher calling to God in the villages and cities of India, in the Arab lands, other $^{?}$Islāmic lands, as well as in Europe and America. He was constantly asked to give public addresses and formal lectures on the subject of those journeys, some of which came to be published, either separately or within his memoirs. Some of these journeys are discussed below.

[303] Foreword, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 17.
[304] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh $^{?}$Abī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ^{c}Araftuh*, pp. 74-75.

The journey of *Ḥajj*

His first journey out of India was for the duty of *Ḥajj* in 1947/1366 AH. He remained in Ḥijāz for six months and became acquainted with its senior *^{c}ulamā$^{?}$*, among them: Shaykh ^{c}Abd al-Razzāq Ḥamzah, Shaykh ^{c}Umar ibn al-Ḥasan $^{?}$Āl al-Shaykh, Sayyid ^{c}Alawī al-Mālikī, Shaykh $^{?}$Amīn al-Kutbī, Shaykh Ḥasan Mashshāṭ, Shaykh Muḥammad al-^{c}Arabī al-Tibānī, and Shaykh Maḥmūd Shuwayl. Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan's book *$^{?}$Ilā Mumaththilī al-Bilād al-$^{?}$Islāmiyyah* had already appeared and served as a good introduction to its author in Ḥijāz. Shaykh Muḥammad ^{c}Alī al-Ḥarkān had read it one day to his students in Masjid al-Nabawī and Shaykh ^{c}Abd al-Razzāq, the $^{?}$Imām of Makkah, had seen the manuscript of *Mādhā Khasir al-^{c}Ālam bi $^{?}$Inḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn*. His commitment and sincerity in the same cause deepened and consolidated the bonds between Shaykh Nadwī and those who received him, "It was due to the nobility, pure heart, and special trait which I experienced many times, of those *^{c}ulamā$^{?}$*, litterateurs and Arab writers that they safeguarded this love and relationship which was established between us in a short time. They continued writing and corresponding with me."[305]

Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan travelled for *ḥajj* a second time in 1951/1370 AH. He became further acquainted with litterateurs and writers, especially Shaykh Muḥammad Surūr al-Ṣabbān. He had several meetings with them; the most important, in al-Bukhārī Garden in Makkah, which was attended by a large group including such senior figures as Shaykh Sa^{c}īd al-^{c}Āmūdī, Shaykh ^{c}Abd al-Quddūs al-$^{?}$Anṣārī, Shaykh ^{c}Alī Ḥasan Fad^{c}aq and Shaykh Muḥsin $^{?}$Aḥmad Bārūm. The meeting was, in the words of Shaykh Nadwī, something of an evaluation of his fluency in Arabic, the depth of his studies and general knowledge, and his familiarity with the English language. Questions centred around Arabic literature and its contemporary personalities, socialism, English literature, Western civilisation, and various other topics. After this, he was requested to conduct a series of talks on Jeddah Radio, called *Bayn al-^{c}Ālam wa Jazīrah al-^{c}Arab* (Between the World and the Arabian Peninsula).

An important incident occured during this journey which Shaykh Nadwī himself records, the bearer of the key to the Ka^{c}bah, Sayyid al-Shaybī, extended a personal invitation to him to enter the Ka^{c}bah, "He also permitted to take with me whomsoever I wished. This was solely from God. I was never given this honour before nor after."[306]

[305] $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 203.
[306] *Urdu Digest*, vol. 11, p. 182 (Ḥajj issue).

His journeys for daᶜwah in India

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan had been oriented to *daᶜwah* since childhood; indeed, his mother had encouraged him to study Arabic and ʾIslāmic sciences for that purpose. It was in 1935/1353 AH that Dr ʾAmbedkar, a senior figure among the so-called *untouchables* and a noted lawyer who helped draft the constitution of the Republic of India, made a public announcement that he was searching for a true religion that would uplift his people.[307] Shaykh Khalīl al-Yamānī spoke about the matter with Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan and his brother who shared his concern and were particularly interested in inviting non-Muslims towards ʾIslām. He urged them to take some English books and translations of the Qurʾān to Dr ʾAmbedkar, and made it clear to them that the tolerance and respect that ʾIslām preaches has been and can be expressed through intermariage between old and new Muslims. He said this in a tone filled with emotion and excitement. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan travelled to Bombay, met with Dr ʾAmbedkar, explained ʾIslām and presented the books to him.

In 1940/1359 AH, the Shaykh travelled with two of his friends to tour the educational institutes and organisations of India. This journey took them to Delhi and from there to Mewat, an area notorious for its lawlessness and banditry. When they reached their destination, they found an astonishing change had taken place there, the people were mild, hospitable, respectful of the rights and honours of men and women alike, and generally kind and unselfish to a degree rare in this increasingly materialistic age. On inquiry, they discovered that this revolution was not the work of any party nor institute, but of one man who had come to them from Delhi and had blown in their midst the breath of *ʾīmān* and righteous living. This man was Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIlyās

[307] This announcement reverberated in the Arab world as well. The periodical, *al-Fath*, published an article in its November 1935 (Shaᶜbān 1354 AH) issue by ʾUstādh Badr al-Dīn al-Ṣīnī titled, *Millions of Hindus wanting to enter through the doors of ʾIslām*, which reported, "Dr ʾAmbedkar, the leader of the untouchables, delivered a speech at a conference held under his auspices in Nasik on 22nd January 1927 (18th Rajab 1345 AH). Thousands of people from the state of Bombay and surrounding areas attended. He opened his speech with the following words, 'We tried for a long time to co-operate and work with the Hindus. But whenever we approached them, they usurped our political rights. In addition, we found that they are not prepared to treat us like humans despite their promises of acknowledging our right to equality. It is therefore useless for us to now request this right. It is now the duty of the untouchables to choose a religion which would confer on them the right to equality and raise them to a level which would make them equal with those who adhere to that religion.' The crowd shouted, 'Why don't we convert to Christianity?' The speaker replied: 'There you will find a distinction between white and brown which is worse than the distinction which we find between the untouchables and the upper-class Hindus. I will not tell you to adopt a particular religion, but I will tell you this much: It is your duty to adopt a religion which gives you equality.'"

Kāndhalawī. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan went to visit him in Delhi and remained for a long time in his company, both when he was travelling and when he was at home. He saw aspects of life never before exposed to him. The most striking thing he witnessed was the quality of his conviction through which he was able to grasp the degree of faith of the Companions ﷺ. He observed how Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIlyās was in a constant state of anxiety, agitation and lament on account of the heedlessness that he saw in people who did not know how serious a responsibility human life is.

This experience proved a major turning point for Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. Until then, he had been concerned mainly with scholarly teaching and writing. He now began to give attention to the condition of the general Muslims and inviting them to God became his greatest concern. He kept the flag of *daᶜwah* raised throughout his life, in India and beyond, among Arabs and non-Arabs. Doing so infused a fresh spirit and gravity in his speeches and writings and accordingly, they began to have greater impact.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan admired the academic and spiritual writings of Mawlānā Mawdūdī. He invited him to Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ and arranged lectures and speeches for him. Relations between them strengthened to the extent that he joined the Jamāᶜat al-ʾIslāmī which Mawlānā Mawdūdī founded. However, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was not attracted to its approach and he soon resigned, while continuing to respect Mawlānā Mawdūdī and acknowledging his intellectual talents.

His journeys to the Arab east

He departed Jeddah on 20th January 1951 (12th Rabīᶜ al-Thānī 1370 AH), and recorded in his diary the strong feelings that the Arab peninsula, as the heartland of ʾIslām and its people, had aroused in him.[308] On reaching Cairo, he stayed, with his friends, in a simple room near al-Mūsikī Street in the ʾAzhar district. He recalls:

> There was nothing for us youngsters in this populous and noisy city of Cairo which would draw the attention of the academic, literary and propagational circles toward us. I, who was the interpreter on behalf of our group, was a frail young man around 36 or 37 years old, wearing Indian clothes. I did not have the cloak of the *ᶜulamāʾ* of al-ʾAzhar nor the garb of gentlemen […] our clothes were slightly better than the pyjamas which the people of the Arab east wore. As for our place of stay, it was a humble office belonging to a welfare organisation, instead of being a large hotel which would have marked the status of a foreign guest […] However, God had provided me with the means to derive benefit from this stay.[309]

[308] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, pp. 218-19.
[309] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 203.

His means of success was surely his sincerity of motive, as Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī remarks in a letter to Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan:

> I still remember that street or that narrow winding alley in the vicinity of al-ʾAzhar, and that humble room in which you and your companions stayed. You refused to stay in one of the luxurious, or at least comfortable hotels, which were offered to you by many who wanted to honour you. You insisted on living like poor students in quest of knowledge."[310]

His book, *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn*, had already reached Cairo's scholarly and literary circles and was the best possible introduction to its author. While in Cairo, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan delivered many talks and lectures at different clubs and organisations. He met with the youth of Egypt, among both traditional and modern circles. He also met the Shaykh of al-ʾAzhar, ʿAbd al-Majīd Salīm, a group of senior professors and *ʿulamāʾ*, and government officials. Among them were: Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Darāz the Principal of al-ʾAzhar, Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, Shaykh ʾAḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Shaykh Ḥasanayn Muḥammad Makhlūf, Shaykh Ḥāmid al-Fiqqī, Shaykh Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, Shaykh Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī the past Shaykh al-ʾIslām of the Ottoman empire, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Shirbīnī, Shaykh Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, Shaykh ʾAḥmad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bannāʾ the father of Shaykh Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ, the Grand Muftī ʾAmīn al-Ḥusaynī, Shaykh ʾAmīr ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Khaṭṭābī al-Rayfī, Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Ḥarb Pashā, Sayyid Quṭb, Shaykh Muḥib al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Shaykh ʾAḥmad Shirbāṣī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, Dr Saʿīd Ramaḍān, Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAshmāwī, Shaykh al-Bahī al-Khawlī, ʾUstādh ʾAḥmad ʾAmīn, Shaykh ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād and Shaykh ʾAḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was rather surprised that typically the *ʿulamāʾ* of Egypt were clean shaven. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī comments on this, "There is no doubt that this was a severe shock to an *ʿālim* who never saw in his country a single scholar who was clean-shaven. […] For this to be a common practice of the *ʿulamāʾ* of a country, it is most astonishing. It is strange for some of the shūyūkh of al-ʾAzhar who are most desirous of returning al-ʾAzhar to its elevated status in the past to be urging the wearing of a turban, which is absolutely a custom, while not thinking to require them to grow their beards, which is undoubtedly a Sunnah."[311]

Some of the formal lectures of Shaykh Nadwī in Cairo, notably on Muḥammad ʾIqbāl, were mentioned previously. In addition, he gave a lecture at Dār al-Shubbān al-Muslimīn on the book *ʾIslām at the Crossroads* by Muḥammad ʾAsad, another on *ʾIslāmic Propagation and its Development in India* in a session in his honour under the auspices of the general head of the Muslim Youth Association, and numerous other talks at *daʿwah* centres and

[310] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAʿlām*, p. 80.
[311] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, p. 20.

associations such as Shabāb Sayyidinā Muḥammad ﷺ, Jamʿiyyah ʾAnṣār al-Sunnat al-Muḥammadiyyah, al-Jamʿiyyat al-Sharʿiyyah, al-Jamʿiyyat al-ʿAshīrat al-Muḥammadiyyah, al-Jamʿiyyat Makārim al-ʾAkhlāq and al-Rābiṭat al-ʾIslāmiyyah.

His meeting with Sayyid Quṭb in his home to discuss his book *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam* was mentineod previosuly. Also during this journey, his booklet, *Listen, O Egypt!* was published, on which Sayyid Quṭb commented, "I read *Listen, O Egypt!* How I hope Egypt has really listened."[312]

The Muslim Brotherhood arranged *daʿwah* journeys and visits for Shaykh Nadwī, acccompanied by the great *dāʿī*, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī. As well as villages and rural areas, he visited al-Qanāṭir al-Khayriyyah, Ṭanṭā, Banhā, Ḥāmūl, Santarīs, al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā, Naklah, al-ʿAzīziyyah, Quwaysnā and Nabrūh, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan held many meetings with students in the canteens of al-ʾAzhar. Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī recalls:

> Our Shaykh did not confine himself to moving around in Cairo despite its large size. Instead, his visits extended to other cities, which had heard of him and invited him to visit and meet all the Muslims there. […] Among these was the city, al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā. I used to deliver sermons in one of the city's *masājid*. Dr Muḥammad Saʿīd, the head of al-Jamʿiyyat al-Sharʿiyyah in the city of al-Maḥallah invited him there. Dr Muḥammad Saʿīd was a well-known dentist who dedicated his life to the revival of the Sunnah and inviting to God in accordance with the approach of our brothers in al-Jamʿiyyat al-Sharʿiyyah. Shaykh Nadwī knew that there were some differences between him [Dr Muḥammad Saʿīd] and the Muslim Brotherhood. The doctor was critical of the Brotherhood because it did not pay attention to some aspects about which he was particular, for example; growing the beard, clipping the moustache, wearing a turban with a part hanging down between the shoulders, and lengthening the *ṣalāh*. The Shaykh said to the doctor, "The propagation of the Brotherhood is a general propagation. It is concerned with uniting the masses upon the general principles of ʾIslām, and then training them gradually into adopting specific etiquette. It is essential for the ʾIslāmic community to have two modes of operation, a general mode like that of the Brotherhood and a specific mode like that of al-Jamʿiyyah." Dr Saʿīd was impressed by the Shaykh's words and invited me to have supper with him […] but all this goodwill was blown away soon thereafter. When we went to the Nabrūh with the Shaykh, I made a statement which angered Dr Saʿīd, may God forgive me and him, and I do not know why he got angry. But the Shaykh grasped the situation with his calmness and wisdom. The people spent that night in *ṣalāh* in the *masjid* at the invitation of the Shaykh. Many people accepted this invitation.[313]

Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī makes reference to these meetings and talks in a letter he wrote to Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan:

[312] Cited in ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 228.
[313] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, pp. 20-21.

I will never forget your fruitful meetings with the youth involved in $^{}$Islāmic da^{c}wah, your living with them as though you were one of them, giving them your thoughts and heart, conveying knowledge which enlightened minds and faith and which illuminated hearts. They were deriving beneficial knowledge from you, good deeds and an enlightened spirit. They were seeing in you the true attributes of a Muslim, the honesty of a believer, the patience of a mujāhid, the strength of a zāhid, the honour of knowledge and the spirit of a dā^{c}ī, who made his prayers, sacrifices, living and dying, solely for God, the Lord of the worlds.[314]

He remained in Cairo for slightly less than six months. Its *^{c}ulamā$^{}$*, shuyūkh, youth, and all those working for the sake of $^{}$Islām became his friends. He then travelled to Sudan, Syria, Jerusalem and Jordan. He met the senior figures of Sudan, like Sayyid ^{c}Alī al-Mīrghanī Pashā, $^{}$Ustādh $^{}$Ismā^{c}īl Baygh al-$^{}$Azharī, who later became the Prime Minister of Sudan, Shaykh Shawqī $^{}$Asad, secretary of Jam^{c}iyyah al-Tabshīr al-$^{}$Islāmī, Shaykh Muḥammad ^{c}Awaḍ, $^{}$Imām of the Jāmi^{c} Masjid, and Shaykh al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Mūsā Sulaymān, leader of the workers and head of Jam^{c}iyyah al-Shubān al-Muslimīn.

He then proceeded to Syria and remained there for 48 days. He spent 24 of them in Damascus. In the other 24, he visited Homs, Hamah, Ma^{c}arrah al-Nu^{c}mān, Aleppo and Haram. It was an opportunity to make contact with the different academic, religious and literary circles, meet their honourable personalities and exchange views with them. Among the academic foundations and centres of Syria he visited are: the centre of the Muslim Brotherhood at the Jāmi^{c} al-Duqāq, al-Majma^{c} al-^{c}Ilmī al-^{c}Arabī in Damascus, al-Maktabah al-Ẓāhiriyyah, Madrasah Dār al-Ḥadīth and Jam^{c}iyyah al-Tamaddun al-$^{}$Islāmī. He also attended one of the important sessions of the Syrian parliament.

He delivered a lecture at the Damascus University entitled *The Testimony of Knowledge and History on the Problem of Palestine*.[315] He gave talks at al-Hay$^{}$ah al-^{c}Ilmiyyah al-$^{}$Islāmiyyah, al-Jam^{c}iyyah al-Gharrā$^{}$, the centres of the Muslim Brotherhood in Homs and Hamah, and at large gathering in Aleppo.

He met senior *^{c}ulamā$^{}$* and litterateurs such as Shaykh ^{c}Abd al-Wahhāb al-Ṣalāḥī, Sayyid Makkī al-Kattānī, Shaykh $^{}$Aḥmad al-Daqar, Shaykh Muḥammad Bahjat al-Baytār, Shaykh $^{}$Abū al-Khayr al-Māyadānī, Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Sibā^{c}ī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mubārak, Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Zarqā, Shaykh Muḥammad $^{}$Aḥmad Dahmān, Shaykh $^{}$Abū al-Yusr ^{c}Ābidīn, Shaykh $^{}$Aḥmad Kaftārū, Shaykh Muḥammad Sa^{c}īd al-Burhānī, Shaykh Muḥammad ^{c}Alī al-Humānī, Shaykh Taysīr Ẓibyān, Shaykh Muḥammad Kamāl al-Khaṭīb, Shaykh Muḥammad Kurd ^{c}Alī, Shaykh Muḥammad ^{c}Izzah Darūzah, Shaykh Khalīl Mardam Baygh, and Shaykh ^{c}Abd al-Qādir al-Maghribī and $^{}$Ustādh ^{c}Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bānī, who was a teacher at the Teacher's College in

[314] $^{}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Rasā$^{}$il al-$^{}$A^{c}lām*, p. 80.
[315] It was published under the title, *al-^{c}Awāmil al-Siyāsiyyah li Kārithah Filasṭīn* (Political Factors in the Tragedy of Palestine).

Damascus accompanied Shaykh Nadwī and introduced him to the various scholarly and influential personalities.

While in Palestine, he visited Bayt al-Maqdis and had the honour of visiting al-Masjid al-$^{}$Aqṣā. He spent the last days of Ramaḍān there and performed the ^{c}Id al-Fiṭr *ṣalāh* there. He also visited Hebron and Bethlehem. On his return from there, he met King ^{c}Abd $^{}$Allāh of Jordan.

The memoirs of this lengthy journey are published in his *Memoirs of a Traveller in the Arab East*. He had made a profound impression and earned a great deal of admiration and love. Many scholars expressed their appreciation of his efforts in the cause of $^{}$Islām in letters to him. For example, the learned $^{}$Islāmic writer, $^{}$Ustādh Ṣāliḥ al-^{c}Ashmāwī, wrote to him from Cairo on 5th August 1951 (2nd Dhū al-Qa^{c}dah 1370 AH), "You left behind an impression that will never be obliterated and a memory that will never cease. The fact of the matter is that you have filled us with your nobility and magnanimity. We saw in you a living example of the pious predecessors, practising *^{c}ulamā$^{}$* and believing brothers. May God give you a long life as an proof for $^{}$Islām and a beacon for the Muslims. May He ﷻ bless our brotherhood and may He reward you with the best of rewards."[316]

His other journeys to Syria

We have mentioned Shaykh Nadwī's travels to Damascus as a visiting lecturer. His journey came about in the following manner:

Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Sibā^{c}ī, the Dean of the Faculty of Sharī^{c}ah at the Syrian University in Damascus, wrote to him on 13th June 1955 (22nd Shawwāl 1374 AH):

> You have probably heard of the establishment of the Faculty of $^{}$Islāmic Sharī^{c}ah in the Syrian University in Damascus. This is an achievement at which the hearts of the Muslims and proponents of truth and goodness were overjoyed. Lessons commenced this year with one class for the first year. A second year class will start at the beginning of the next academic year *$^{}$in shā$^{}$ $^{}$Allāh*.
>
> The faculty committee urged me to write expressing its approval to contract you for a two year or one year teaching post, so that the students may benefit from your deep knowledge and understanding of $^{}$Islām and its message. I hope that you will honour us by agreeing to this request while expressing whatever conditions you would want to lay down, whether it be with regard to the monthly salary or anything else. I hope to receive your reply soon confirming this valuable wish of mine.[317]

Shaykh Nadwī accepted the invitation but refused any remuneration for the work.[318] He remained in Damascus for three months during which he

[316] $^{}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Rasā$^{}$il $^{}$A^{c}lām*, pp. 96-97.
[317] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.
[318] $^{}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, p. 153.

was in constant contact with the *^{c}ulamā$^{\circ}$*, litterateurs, thinkers and leaders of $^{\circ}$Islāmic movements and organisations. Apart from the lectures he gave at the university on the subject of renewal and renewers in $^{\circ}$Islāmic history, he gave several talks on Radio Syria, the first titled, *Listen, O Syria!* He also gave a talk at the centre of al-$^{\circ}$Ikhwān in Aleppo titled, *Our Need for New Faith*, and another, *The Palestinian Situation is Firmly Connected to $^{\circ}$Islāmic Sentiment* at the $^{\circ}$Islāmic Conference in Damascus.

His lectures and talks were widely acclaimed.[319] There was benefit on both sides, as Shyakh $^{\circ}$Abū al-Ḥasan himself recognised:

> My stay of three months in Damascus were the sweetest days of my life and purest moments which I cannot describe. I never enjoyed such joy and amiability at any other place, apart from my time in Makkah and Madīnah. It was a mixture of an opening of the heart, expansion of the chest, physical health, the natural beauty of the land and pure spirituality. The probable reason for this was that it is the burial ground for many Companions ﷺ, senior and righteous personalities and the centre for $^{\circ}$Islāmic conquests. A mixture of all these created an atmosphere of happiness, enjoyment and delight. That was an era of tranquillity, peace and prosperity. It was an era of $^{\circ}$Islāmisation for the people of Damascus and all the people of Syria.[320]

He travelled to Syria for a third time in 1964/1383 AH and a fourth time for just half a day in 1973/1393 AH.

He travelled to Lebanon in 1956/1375 AH and visited Beirut, Qalamūn and Tripoli where he met religious and academic figures, and leaders of religious movements, among them: Shaykh Muḥammad ^{c}Umar Dā^{c}ūq, founder of Ḥarakah ^{c}Ibād al-Raḥmān, Shaykh Muḥammad ^{c}Alāyā, Muftī of Lebanon, Shaykh Shafīq Yamūt, head of the Sharī^{c}ah court, and Shaykh Muḥammad $^{\circ}$Asad (formerly Leopold Weiss) author of *The Road to Mecca*, Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Khālidī, a well-known *dā^{c}ī* and worker in social fields, and Shaykh al-Fuḍayl al-Wartalānī, a well-known Algerian *mujāhid*. While in Beirut, he visited the centre of Ḥarakah ^{c}Ibād al-Raḥmān and the Faculty of Sharī^{c}ah. While at King Sa^{c}ūd College, an $^{\circ}$Islāmic centre in Beirut he delivered a lecture on the subject, *Nations do not survive on the basis of civilisations; rather, they survive due to prophethood with its spirit and particular qualities supporting them.* While in Tripoli he visited the Faculty of Sharī^{c}ah, Markaz al-Mawlawiyyah, Madrasah al-Ghazzālī, Madrasah Ibn Khaldūn and other centres.

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[319] *Ibid*., p. 154.

[320] $^{\circ}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, pp. 264-65.

His subsequent journeys

He travelled to Kuwait in 1962/1381 AH where he delivered the powerful address, *Listen, O Flower of the Desert!* He made other journeys to Kuwait in 1968/1387 AH, 1983/1403 AH and 1987/1407 AH. He travelled to the United Arab Emirates in 1974/1394 AH at the invitation of the ruler of Sharjah, $^{\circ}$Amīr Sulṭān ibn Muḥammad Qāsimī, with further journeys there in the years 1976/1396 AH, 1983/1403 AH, 1988/1408 AH and 1993/1413 AH. He travelled to Qatar in 1990/1410 AH to attend a Sīrah Conference. The most important lectures that he delivered in the Gulf states are printed in the book, *Speaking Frankly with our Arab Muslim Brothers*.

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was in constant contact with the *ᶜulamāᵓ*, litterateurs, thinkers and leaders of ᵓIslāmic movements and organisations. Apart from the lectures he gave at the university on the subject of renewal and renewers in ᵓIslāmic history, he gave several talks on Radio Syria, the first titled, *Listen, O Syria!* He also gave a talk at the centre of al-ᵓIkhwān in Aleppo titled, *Our Need for New Faith*, and another, *The Palestinian Situation is Firmly Connected to ᵓIslāmic Sentiment* at the ᵓIslāmic Conference in Damascus.

His lectures and talks were widely acclaimed.[319] There was benefit on both sides, as Shyakh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan himself recognised:

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ﷺ, descended from Paradise onto this land. The Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'O people! Your Lord is one, and your father is one.' This announcement is an absolute basis for human brotherhood, and the most important clause from the international constitution for human rights. If this was the first place where $^{?}$Adām ﷺ descended, as per the famous rumour, then it is your duty to make this announcement of the Messenger of God ﷺ ten times for every one time that other $^{?}$Islāmic countries announce it. And if they say it secretly and bashfully, you are more worthy of saying it openly and categorically. And that you invite to and carry this message."

He travelled to Bangladesh in 1984/1404 AH and visited the centres of $^{?}$Islāmic learning in Dhaka, Chittagong, Caucas Bazar, Sylhet and Momin Shahī. He addressed huge gatherings in Bangladesh. These lectures of his are published in an Urdu book entitled, *Tuḥfat Mashriq*.

He travelled to Malaysia in 1987/1407 AH at the invitation of I.B.Y.M., the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia. During his travel he visited Kuala Lumpur and Kuala Terengganu. He delivered lectures at the National University, the Technological University, the Malaysian University, the International $^{?}$Islāmic University, the centre of the Muslim Youth Movement, the centre of the $^{?}$Islāmic Party, the $^{?}$Islāmic Educational Institute and at the general gatherings of Muslims.

The $^{?}$Islāmic countries of Anatolia gained their independence in 1991/1411 AH. This was a new opportunity for Muslims to establish contacts with their brothers in faith in these countries. The Oxford Centre for $^{?}$Islāmic Studies held a conference in Samarqand between 23rd-24th October 1993 (7th-8th Jumādā al-$^{?}$Ūlā 1414 AH) on the life of $^{?}$Imām al-Bukhārī as a prelude to the decision to rebuild the $^{?}$Imām al-Bukhārī Masjid and to establish a centre for the study of *ḥadīth*. Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan attended this conference as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Oxford Centre for $^{?}$Islāmic Studies. He visited Tashkent and Samarqand as well as Bukhārā, I had the pleasure and honour of accompanying him on this delightful academic journey. The Shaykh presented his thesis on *$^{?}$Imām Muḥammad ibn $^{?}$Ismā^{c}īl al-Bukhārī and his Book, the Ṣaḥīḥ* in a session of the conference chaired by Shaykh ^{c}Abd al-Fattāḥ $^{?}$Abū Ghuddah before a large group of *^{c}ulamā$^{?}$* and research scholars.

His journeys to the West

His friend Dr Sa^{c}īd Ramaḍān, wrote to him on 5th August 1963 (14th Rabī^{c} al-$^{?}$Awwal 1383 AH) from Geneva:

I had written to you previously about a special meeting of the $^{?}$Islāmic Centre. I know that you are fully occupied in many activities and I also know that you are discomforted by too many foreign journeys. However, I am extremely desirous of our third annual meeting having the blessing of your presence. […] I feel a severe need for a meeting of two or three days with yourself and a select group of Muslim

students from Europe. This would be like a blessed meal for them which would remove the spiritual hunger they are experiencing. God may open your heart to making this an annual *meal* for which we will make the necessary arrangements every year *$^{?}$in shā$^{?}$ $^{?}$Allāh*. This meeting would be in September *$^{?}$in shā$^{?}$ $^{?}$Allāh*. I have delayed setting the dates as I await your reply. [321]

Shyakh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan accepted this sincere invitation and left for Geneva in September 1963 (Jumādā al-$^{?}$Ūlā 1383 AH). It was his first journey to Europe. During this trip he visited Geneva, Lausanne, Berne, Paris, London, Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow and Edinburgh. He met many Western scholars and Orientalists. He delivered lectures at Edinburgh and London Universities and at Muslim gatherings. During this journey he also visited the Spanish cities of Madrid, Toledo, Seville, Cordoba and Granada.

His second journey to Europe was in 1964/1383 AH, when he visited London, Berlin, Achen, Munich and Bonn.

His third journey in 1969/1388 AH was again at the invitation of the $^{?}$Islāmic Centre in Geneva. He also visited London, Birmingham, Manchester, Blackburn, Sheffield, Dewsbury, Leeds and Glasgow. He delivered lectures at each of these places, including a lecture at Birmingham University and another at Leeds University. His lectures and talks in Europe are compiled in a book entitled, *Speaking Frankly to the West*.

His fourth journey was to London in 1983/1403 AH in order to establish the Oxford Centre for $^{?}$Islāmic Studies. It was on this occasion that he presented his valuable essay titled, *$^{?}$Islām and the West*. He undertook several other visits to England, and visited Belgium in 1985/1405 AH.

He travelled to America for the first time in 1977/1397 AH at the invitation of the Muslim Students' Association of America and Canada, and again in 1993/1413 AH. During his first journey, he visited New York, Indianapolis, Bloomington, Manhattan, Chicago, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Detroit, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, San José, Los Angeles, Montreal, Toronto and Washington. He delivered lectures at the following universities: Columbia, Harvard, Detroit, Southern California and Utah. He also delivered a talk at the prayer hall of the United Nations and many talks at select Muslim gatherings. The most important lectures of this journey are published in a book entitled, *Speaking Frankly in America*. He called upon the Muslims to safeguard their $^{?}$Islāmic identity in Western countries and to study Western civilisation, carefully distinguishing its harmful and beneficial aspects. He reminded them that they were living examples of $^{?}$Islām, on show to neighbours who adhered to different religious denominations or to none.

All the journeys of Shaykh $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan were undertaken in the spirit of a true believer and a *dā^{c}ī* deeply concerned by the condition of the $^{?}$Islāmic communities he visited. He did not opt to go on these visits as a tourist, to

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[321] $^{?}$Abū al-Ḥasan ^{c}Alī Nadwī, *Rasā$^{?}$il $^{?}$A^{c}lām*, pp. 109-10.

take delight in their attractions, or to relax. On visiting Spain in 1963/1383 AH, he wrote a letter to Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Qazzāz, the former General Secretary of the Muslim World League in Makkah, in which he expressed his emotions and impressions. He proposed the building of a *masjid* in Madrid at the expense of the Kingdon of Saudi Arabia. Shaykh al-Qazzāz replied on 15th November 1963 (27th Jumādā al-ʾĀkhar 1383 AH):

> I received and read your valuable letter which you wrote to me from Madrid, the capital of Spain, after your visit to that country. I informed your friend Shaykh Muḥammad Sarūr about its contents. We studied this letter and cried just as you cried, and we are pained just as you were pained at what happened to ʾIslām in that country. Your letter stirred our grief and sorrow. There is no power and might except with God; to God we belong and to Him is our return. There is no doubt that it is a huge and mighty responsibility as you yourself mentioned. It is incumbent on us to ponder over how we are going to meet God if we do not do something to salvage whatever we can of the ʾIslāmic legacy remaining in that country.
>
> The proposals which you outlined are important and we have already started studying the guidelines we have to follow. When you come for the meeting of the founding committee, we will investigate this matter collectively before taking a decision.
>
> We value your sense of ʾIslāmic honour. We ask God to realise our hopes through you, and for justice to be restored. We also ask Him to enable us to benefit from you, and to provide us with many people like you who possess a sense of ʾIslāmic honour and genuine noble-mindedness.[322]

Public lectures

In 1942/1361 AH Shaykh Nadwī was invited by al-Jāmiᶜat al-Milliyyah, Delhi, to give a lecture, which was later printed under the title *Bayn al-Dīn wa al-Madaniyyah*. It was highly appreciated at the time, appeared in several newspapers and made a considerable impact. In 1951/1370 AH he gave several lectures on the themes of *al-ʾIslām fī Mutafarraq al-Ṭuruq* and *al-Daᶜwah al-ʾIslāmiyyah wa Taṭawwarātihā fī al-Hind*, at Dār al-Shubbān al-Muslimīn; on ʾIqbāl, *Shiᶜr ʾIqbāl wa Risālatuh* at the College of Dār al-ᶜUlūm and *al-ʾInsān al-Kāmil fī Naẓar Muḥammad ʾIqbāl* at Fuᶜād al-ʾŪlā University. In the same year he gave a lecture in Damascus entitled *Shahādat al-ᶜIlm wa al-Tārīkh fī Qaḍiyyah Filasṭīn*. Then, as a visiting lecturer at Damascus University in 1956/1375 AH, he delivered the series of lectures on renewal and renewers in ʾIslāmic thought *al-Tajdīd wa al-Mujaddidīn fī Tārīkh al-Fikr al-ʾIslāmī*, which would later be collected and published in his wonderful book, *Saviours of the ʾIslāmic Spirit*. One of his most important lectures, *al-Nubūwwah wa al-ʾAnbiyāʾ fī Ḍawʾ al-Qurʾān*, was given in 1963/1382 AH at the ʾIslāmic University in Madīnah at the invitation of its deputy rector, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz ibn Bāz. He travelled to Riyadh in

[322] *Ibid.*, pp. 102-03.

1968/1387 AH upon the invitation of the Saudi minister of education to take part in the planning of a Sharīᶜah college. He delivered several lectures at Riyadh University and the teacher's college, some of which were included in the book, *Naḥw Tarbiyyat ʾIslāmiyyat Ḥurrat fī al-Ḥukūmāt wa al-Bilād al-ʾIslāmiyyah*.

In his later years Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan continued to give lectures, both in the ʾIslāmic world (for example at Yarmūk University in Jordan in 1984/1404 AH) and in various European capitals. Some of the latter were presented in book form as *Ḥadīth maᶜ al-Gharb* and *al-ʾIslām wa al-Gharb*.

His tarbiyah

The crucial importance of *tarbiyah* or training is that the future of the Muslims and of ʾIslām is secured through it. The most striking of Shaykh Nadwī's essays on this is *al-Tarbiyah al-ʾIslāmiyyah al-Ḥurrah* (Independent ʾIslāmic Training); also important in this regard is his book, *How the Muslims look at the Ḥijāz and the Arabian Peninsula*. He said, "I do not know of a trust which carries a heavier responsibility, which is more serious, and which has a deeper impact on the future of the *ʾummah* than education and training. One slip-up in this regard can cause an entire community to fall into an abyss and lead to its extinction. As such, it alone has the ability to direct hearts and minds in a correct manner, give new life to a community and construct a brilliant future for it."[323]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was firm in his belief that, for Muslims as a community, the message of ʾIslām must be the foundation of their educational systems and curricula. The ʾIslāmic community is "a community which has a foundation, a message, and a call. Therefore, its education has to be subservient to this foundation and belief-system, and to this message and call. This is because education is a tool to create generations who believe in this foundation, who adopt this belief-system, who bear this message, and who fulfil this call. Any education which does not fulfil this obligation acts treacherously towards this responsibility or betrays this trust, then it is not an ʾIslāmic education."[324]

The dangers of the Western educational system

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan regarded the Western educational and teaching institutes and academies imposed in ʾIslāmic countries as akin to abbatoirs for individuals, peoples and nations:

[323] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Tarbiyah al-ʾIslāmiyyah al-Ḥurrah* (Lucknow: Nadwat al-ᶜUlamaʾ, n.d.).
[324] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Any conversant and well-versed person knows that a system of education has a heart and spirit, just as a living organism has a heart and spirit. The heart and spirit of the education system is a shadow of the beliefs and psychologies of those who set up the system, their objectives in knowledge and study of the universe, their view of life and a manifestation of their values. This is what gives the education system its own identity and a heart and spirit of its own. It is this spirit which permeates its entire being [...] if this Western educational system is applied to Muslim countries or an ʾIslāmic society, then before anything else, it will cause a rational conflict. This will gradually lead to wavering in beliefs, intellectual apostasy and eventually religious apostasy.

One of the insightful scholars of the West, Muḥammad ʾAsad, rightly said, "A Western upbringing of Muslim youngsters would most certainly lead to a wavering in their thoughts that they are the representatives of a purely divine civilisation which was brought by ʾIslām. There is no one who can doubt that religious beliefs will fade away very swiftly among those who were brought up under Western principles."[325]

Shaykh Nadwī feared that the Western educational system would serve as a means to undermine and destroy the ʾIslāmic orientation and aspiration of Muslims, a means of putting an end to this religion as a force in the world. An Indian poet remarked that it would have sufficed Pharaoh, instead of slaughtering the Israelites, to establish a college for them where he could mould their minds as he liked, without having to shed any blood.

The independence of ʾIslāmic training

It follows that ʾIslāmic training must be independent, standing on its own principles and foundations. It should not borrow its philosophy from the West or the East, while taking means and tools from wherever it likes in accordance with the maxim, "Wisdom is the lost property of the believer. He is most eligible for it wherever he finds it."[326] Shaykh Nadwī criticised traditional education for its tendency to overly focus on controversial issues. He criticised modern education's disregard of the spirit and the higher goals of life. He would quote the words of ʾIqbāl, "Modern education does not teach the eyes of the student to shed tears, nor the heart to be submissive." He said, "We have to start developing syllabi for this purpose. It is the call of the hour and the need of the modern world. We need to formulate a new course of education through which belief in God is firmly embedded."[327]

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[325] *Ibid.*, pp. 23-26.

[326] ʾAbū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, "Wisdom is the lost property of the believer. He is most eligible for it wherever he finds it." al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, k. *al-ʿIlm* b. *Mā Jāʾ fī Faḍl al-Fiqh ʿalā al-ʿIbādah*.

[327] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

A role model

The purpose of *tarbiyah*, training individuals how to be Muslims, is not to impart theoretical knowledge about which students can debate what is good and then triumph in that debate. Rather, it is to produce Muslims who are practising examples, living embodiments of good. An ʾIslāmic consciousness embraced in that way, as Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan embraced all aspects of his life and activity, will not be vulnerable to intimidation or corruption by the forces of power and corruption in the world:

> The philosophies and systems opposed to ʾIslām consider it possible to sell man in the market for a price or for something else in return. If he is not happy with this price, he will be happy with a larger amount. [...] The genuine success of a university lies in training a particular attitude whereby it produces educated people who are not prepared to sell their consciences no matter how high the price. No destructive philosophy, deviated propaganda, government with flawed policies, or vicious power, no matter how skilful or sly it may be, must be able to buy these people, no matter how high the price. These people must categorically state, either verbally or by their actions, "We consider it far more difficult to do that than to hunt down a griffon."[328]

> One of the strongest and all-enduring needs of an ʾIslāmic society is to have men of God, people who are truthful, who consolidate and do not innovate, who are firmly rooted in knowledge and religion, whose hearts are firmly connected to God - at a time when decadence afflicts ʾIslāmic governments, at a time of material and lustful temptations, and when there is competition for luxury and opulence in Muslim societies. The teachers must instil in the hearts of their students the confidence to go beyond base and despicable motives, and beyond fighting over the vanities of the world. They must make the low life, despicable possessions, meek surrender to powers and luxuries, and the selling of consciences and responsibilities abhorrent to them. They must instil in them the love to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their beliefs and principles, to gain martyrdom in the cause of God, to fight against destructive despair, to renew hope in God and in His help. They must occupy themselves with inviting to God and training the soul.[329]

Start by developing the Muslim individual

The reform of a society cannot proceed without prior reform of a sufficient number of the individuals whom comprise it.

Shaykh Nadwī feels that the reform of societies cannot be achieved without the reform of its individuals. They are the bricks of the building, which cannot be strong

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[328] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Dawr al-Jāmiʿāt al-ʾIslāmiyyah al-Maṭlūb* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿIlmī, 1987), p. 30.

[329] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Qarn al-Khāmis ʿAshr al-Hijrī* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī, n.d.), p. 36.

unless the bricks are good and strong. The rectitude of the individual has to be realised from the inside, not the outside; from the internal, not from the external. In other words, by the rectitude of ones heart before everything else.[330]

The centres of education in which these individuals are trained can never be ʾIslāmic unless they have a true affiliation to the *madrasah* of the Messenger ﷺ, "Everything has a lineage [...] Similarly, every madrasah whose lineage does not end with the attribute of al-Masjid al-Nabawī does not deserve to be called a *madrasah*. Because in such a case it will be a source of ignorance and deviation. It will not be a place of study, knowledge and guidance..."[331] If the centres of education are so oriented, they will produce *ᶜulamāʾ* and *duᶜāt* able to free society from the suffocating cultural hegemony of the Western world-view. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan once addressed the students of Dār al-ᶜUlūm Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ forthrightly on this issue:

The people who have assumed leadership over the affairs of Muslims at present consider Western civilisation to be a role model, and the final stage of the human adventure. They consider it to be the final attempt for the organisation of life, and the last successful experiment for the solution of human problems. They believe that it has replaced the ʾIslāmic system, and believe that the system of ʾIslām has lost its utility, and it should not enter the field of life. No class of people or no individual is safe from this issue which has pervaded the ʾIslāmic world.

[...] We have to convince the educated class and return its faith that ʾIslām is qualified to complement and co-exist in this era, lead it and steer it. This is a tribulation of the times. It is your duty to affirm that not only is ʾIslām able to thrive in the era, it is able to rescue it from the destruction into which it has fallen. It is able to direct it to the path, to pour blessings on it and to teach it the correct course of life. It is your duty to prepare for this struggle. The faith of the Muslims in ʾIslām has been shaken from the furthest east in the islands of Indonesia to the furthest west due to the conspiracy of America and Europe. ʾIslām is referred to as being *backward* and *fundamentalist* so that the educated person will recoil from it. It is your duty to go forward and undertake a *jihād* after which people will be able to say proudly, 'We are fundamentalists.' It is *fundamentalism* alone that can rescue the world. The centre of corruption is the absence of *fundamentalism*. In the world now there are no principles, no criteria, no limits; there are mere vain desires, and worship of lust and power. It is therefore your duty to prepare for this *jihād*.[332]

If the teaching and training they receive is sufficient and appropriate, the students of authentic ʾIslāmic and genuinely independent centres of education will qualify as *ᶜulamāʾ* and *duᶜāt* able to give a true judgement when asked to

[330] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜAraftuh*, p. 114.
[331] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Ṭarīq ʾilā al-Saᶜādah wa al-Qiyādah* (Lucknow: Nadwat al-ᶜUlamaʾ, n.d.), p. 20.
[332] *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

do so, able to issue a verdict with conviction when asked for a verdict, and when they call to God, to do so with insight. Shaykh Nadwī said:

They must represent the Messenger ﷺ after the end of prophethood. They must renew the community's contact with God and the Messenger ﷺ. They must renew the covenant which this community entered into, and which all Muslims entered through *ʾīmān* and uttering the two testimonies.[333]

His attitude towards *taṣawwuf*

Muslims have long differed about the Ṣūfiyyah and *taṣawwuf*. Some have been fanatically in favour, sung their praises without reserve, adopted their views in every respect and defended them even when they erred. There are also others who have been fanatically against them, denounced all of them without distinction and denounced *taṣawwuf* as a foreign intrusion into ʾIslām.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was by temperament inclined to Ṣūfī devotional practice. However, he was too deeply learned and rooted in the norms and laws of the Qurʾān and Sunnah to be attracted by the accretions of doctrine and innovations in ritual that mar some later developments among some Ṣūfī groups. The early Ṣūfiyyah were adherents of the Qurʾān and Sunnah, remained within the limits of the Sharīᶜah, and rejected innovations and fabrications in thinking and conduct. Many embraced ʾIslām at their hands, countless numbers of sinners repented at their hands, and they left a record of their spiritual insight and experiences that none but a fanatic or bigot could deny. Yet, over time, there appeared Ṣūfiyyah who committed excesses and deviated from the straight path, some of them being well-known for their un-ʾIslāmic ideas. *Taṣawwuf* thus changed from a system of moral and spiritual cultivation to a philosophy comprising concepts estranged from the original teachings of ʾIslām. Shaykh Nadwī therefore felt there was a great need to study and describe the sciences of *taṣawwuf* in the light of the Qurʾān and Sunnah, and wrote his brilliant *Rabbāniyyah lā Rahbāniyyah* (Holiness, not Monasticism).

Shaykh Nadwī identified the weakness in ʾIslāmic society which lead to intellectual rebellion, moral decay and deviated practices. This weakness he said, must be addressed:

I do not insist on a specific methodology of *tazkiyah* which was formulated by a certain generation of Muslims and which eventually came to be known as *taṣawwuf*. There is no need for this term as the Qurʾān and Sunnah have sufficient words and terms, I do not absolve a group which assumed this call constituted a deficiency in knowledge and thinking or an error in practice; nor do I believe that this group is faultless. Everyone errs and also is right. However, we have to fill this void which has happened in our life and society, and fill this place which was occupied by those who

[333] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾImām ᶜAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī* (Lucknow: Nadwat al-ᶜUlamaʾ, n.d.), p. 49.

invited to God, the devout servants of God who were occupied with the cultivation and purification of the soul, reviving *ʾīmān* and connecting with God, calling to internal reform, and paying particular attention to the individual in preference to the claims of society.[334]

Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ

Established in 1894/1311 AH, the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ movement has played a leading role in reforming the system and balance of ʾIslāmic education in India. It progressed in bridging the divide between *traditional education* and *modern-education*, in reducing extremism, in developing curricula that welcomed the modern, provided it was beneficial, and retained the traditional provided it was wholesome and flexible. In this way it served the cause of unity, moderation and compromise.

The movement was fortunate in the quality of the men who founded it and sustained it in its formative years. They were scholars who had a huge store of knowledge from the legacy of ʾIslām in India, who did not confine themselves to the traditional at the exclusion of the rational, nor to the rational at the exclusion of the traditional. Moreover, they were men by no means removed from or indifferent to the events and ideas of the era in which they were living. The prominent men amongst them were: ʿAllāmah Muḥammad ʿAlī Mongerī, ʿAllāmah Shiblī Nuʿmānī, ʿAllāmah Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī and ʿAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī. They built for their students a unique academic environment that broadened their minds and nurtured their faith. Those students absorbed their knowledge and wisdom, adopted their style and temperament and continued on their path.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's connection with Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ goes back to the time of its inception. His father, ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī, was one of its founders and became its head in 1922/1340 AH. His older son Dr ʿAbd al-ʿAlī served as head from 1930/1348 AH until his death in 1961/1380 AH. He was succeeded by Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan until his death in 1999/1419 AH. He had registered as a student of Nadwah in 1929/1347 AH, and was appointed as a teacher in 1934/1352 AH. He was chosen as member of its administrative assembly in 1948/1367 AH, and appointed as deputy head of education in 1949/1368 AH, and then head in 1954/1373 AH.

Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ became an example worthy of emulation in all its departments and faculties, in the sciences of Sharīʿah, Arabic language, and ʾIslāmic thought. Many spoke in glowing terms about the institution, its *duʿāt* and its *ʿulamāʾ*. For example, ʾUstādh Saʿīd al-Raḥmān al-ʾAʿẓamī said:

During its brilliant era, Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ realised notable accomplishments in every field of education and training, explaining ʾIslāmic civilisation, the objects of

[334] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rabbāniyyah lā Rahbāniyyah*, p. 17.

religion, the concepts of ʾIslāmic life, correcting the process of knowledge and research, and uncovering the ʾIslāmic Sharīʿah in illuminating discourses from the grime of false ideas and notions. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan delineated the original purpose of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ with absolute clarity and spent all of his energy and faculties for that purpose. He continued doing so to the extent that God enabled him to prepare a generation of devoted students who followed the same way, emulated him on the straight path, and assisted him with obedience and loyalty in every way possible. Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ was thus a lofty minaret for knowledge, literature and Sharīʿah during his era. It was a unique example of combining firm faith with extensive knowledge, carrying the flag of illuminated belief and modern knowledge, calling for the rule of the Sharīʿah in all aspects of life, and calling out with its only slogan, *Towards ʾIslām anew*."[335]

Explaining the ideology of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ

Shaykh Nadwī undertook to explain the ideology of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ in many of his books, speeches, journeys and visits. He describes the ideology of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ with regard to removing the gap between the *ʿulamāʾ* and educated class:

The academic movement of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, which was established by Mawlānā Muḥammad ʿAlī Mongerī, and led by ʿAllāmah Shiblī Nuʿmānī and his associates, and the Dār al-ʿUlūm which was under its auspices, was worthy of creating a bridge which would connect the ʾIslāmic and Western cultures, and the two classes, the scholars of religion and the modern educated class, to produce a new ideology which combines the good of the old and the new. It used the motto of those who belong to this academic school, *Combining the virtuous of the past with the wholesome of the present*, and, *Combining firmness in principles and objectives with flexibility in the subsidiaries and means*. The leaders of this ideology looked at the system and programme of education as a tool capable of growth and progress, and subject to the needs and demands of every era, while safeguarding the spirit, goals, and fundamental sciences. They did not look at it as an inflexible steel tool. They considered it to be filled with vitality and development. To put this in other words, ***religion is an eternal reality***. It is not in need of evolution and alteration. However, knowledge is a flowering and fruit-bearing tree which bears its fruit at all times, and which continues growing and flourishing. They considered ʾIslām to be a religion for the whole of humanity and a religion for all times. It is therefore natural for it to pass through different stages of academic and human development and progress. It modifies its leadership in environments where thoughts and ideas change. It is therefore necessary to expand the circle of education and culture, which prepares the best exponents of ʾIslām, and which always proves its suitability and vitality.[336]

The founders feared for the lives of the Muslims from the strict adherents and the extremists, due to the seclusion of the *ʿulamāʾ* from life and their falling behind

[335] *al-Baʿth al-ʾIslāmī* (Special Issue; March, 2000), pp. 15-16.

[336] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Ṣirāʿ Bayn al-Fikrah al-ʾIslāmiyyah wa al-Fikrah al-Gharbiyyah* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿIlmī, 1998), pp. 66-67.

the caravan of culture and knowledge, and from juridical fanaticism and disputes which were fierce and active in the previous era.

Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ and its Dār al-ᶜUlūm were established on the basis of the middle way and moderation, combining the virtuous of the past with the wholesome of the present; between the eternal religion which never changes and knowledge which constantly changes, develops and progresses; among the different groups of the ᵓAhl al-Sunnah, which do not differ in belief and explicit texts and which were established from the very start on the belief that the ᵓIslāmic sciences are sciences that are living and growing so that the system of education is subject to the law of change and renewal. It therefore has to undergo reform and renewal in every time and clime, additions must be made, and certain things must be removed in response to the developments of the time and the needs and conditions of the Muslims.[337]

The Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ movement was more of an ideological movement and an ideological school than a mere movement to reform the education system. It went into the battlefield of conflict between the old and the new [...] Despite all of this, the ideology of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ is a balanced ideology, and a reality which can save the ᵓIslāmic education system from destruction, and through which the ᵓIslāmic community can avert conflict between the old and new, between the existence of two distant and antagonistic classes, the class of *ᶜulamāᵓ* and the modern educated class, a situation that has caused much misery in many ᵓIslāmic countries, and which, in many cases was the cause of a country following a secular and atheistic course.[338]

The mission of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ

The mission in religion and belief was to teach the religion in its original purity, far from the distortion of extremists, the impersonation of liars, and the mis-interpretation of ignoramuses. In order to understand and explain, this means referring to the practice of its first original and authentic sources, holding on to the essence of religion, acting on its injunctions, embodying its essence and spirit. The complementary view of history is that the era in which ᵓIslām appeared was the most blessed, and the best generation is the one which grew up in the lap of prophethood and graduated from the first Qurᵓān and *ᵓīmān* school. Prosperity lies solely in following the spirit and example of that era.

Its academic view, educational philosophy and knowledge cannot be divided into old and new, East and West. Or, if it is to be divided, it may be divided between correct and erroneous, beneficial and harmful, essential and optional, and ends and means.

Its stand on acquiring or refusing knowledge is based on the Prophetic teaching, "Wisdom is the lost property of the believer. He is most eligible for

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Its defending ᵓIslām and facing the challenges of the time is based on the divine instruction, "Prepare for battle with whatever you can muster of strength" (*Sūrat al-ᵓAnfāl*, 8: 60).

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The change from the old to new ways of teaching Arabic was not easy or straightforward. There was a strong realisation that Nadwah would have to review its existing textbooks and prepare new ones to serve the required

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Its method of inviting towards God and presenting ᵓIslām is based on the wise advice, "Speak to people in accordance with their intellectual status. Do you want God and His Messenger ﷺ to be rejected?"[340]

Its handling of differences among past scholars regarding the *madhāhib* is based on investigation and accommodation, harbouring good thoughts and searching for excuses for them, and giving preference to what is most concordant with the Qurᵓān and Sunnah, most likely to unite, furthest from causing division and closest to the common good of ᵓIslām.

In short, the mission of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ is closest to the intellectual, academic, theological and juridical school of Shaykh ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm Dihlawī (d. 1762/1175 AH).[341]

Development of the syllabus at Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ

Shaykh Nadwī commends the syllabus of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ as follows:

> The Dār al-ᶜUlūm paid particular attention to the Qurᵓān, the eternal message, teaching it as a book for every era and generation. I paid attention to the Arabic language, which is the key to understanding the Qurᵓān, and the protector of its treasures. The Dār al-ᶜUlūm turned its attention to teaching this noble language as a living language from among the written and spoken languages, not like an extinct language which goes no further than scrolls, as was previously the case in India. The Dār al-ᶜUlūm reduced those ancient sciences which do not have a major benefit and replaced them with certain contemporary sciences indispensable to a contemporary scholar wishing to serve his religion and community. It tried to produce men who would spread the glad tidings of the eternal ᵓIslāmic religion to the modern era, explaining the ᵓIslāmic Sharīᶜah in a language which the people understand, and in a style that would captivate their hearts, a balanced nation between inflexibility and rejection.[342]

The change from the old to new ways of teaching Arabic was not easy or straightforward. There was a strong realisation that Nadwah would have to review its existing textbooks and prepare new ones to serve the required

[339] al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiᶜ*, k. *al-ᶜIlm* b. *Mā Jāᵓ fī Faḍl al-Fiqh ᶜalā al-ᶜIbādah*.
[340] al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ᶜIlm*, b. *Man Khaṣṣ bi al-ᶜIlm Qawm Dūn Qawm Karāhiyah ᵓan lā Yafhamū*.
[341] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *ᵓAḍwāᵓ ᶜalā al-Ḥarakāt wa al-Daᶜawāt al-Dīniyyah wa al-ᵓIslāmiyyah* (Lucknow: al-Majmaᶜ al-ᵓIslāmī al-ᶜIlmī, 1998), pp. 45-46. Additionally, Shaykh ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥīm Dihlawī is commonly known as Shāh Walī ᵓAllāh Dihlawī.
[342] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Muslimūn fī al-Hind*, p. 139.

purpose. Shaykh Nadwī was appointed as a teacher of Qurʾānic *tafsīr* and Arabic literature. He had studied Arabic under two Arab teachers, Shaykh Khalīl al-Yamānī and Dr Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, from whom he acquired a taste for Arabic literature and an ability to express himself eloquently. He understood that the available textbooks did not meet the needs of Indian students. He then wrote the series *al-Qirāʾah al-Rāshidah* in three parts in 1944/1363 AH, and the series *Qaṣaṣ al-Nabiyyīn li al-ʾAṭfāl* in five parts. He explains his method and aims in this series:

> I adhered to four points:
>
> 1. The store of words must be the minimum and become embedded in the mind of the student through frequent repetition of the words.
> 2. The book must be written in the language of the Qurʾān and verses must be set, like the stone of a ring, at appropriate places in the text [i.e. fittingly].
> 3. It must contain the fundamental beliefs: belief in the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), messengership (*risālah*) and the hereafter (*maʿād*). These beliefs must be conveyed to the student indirectly.
> 4. The stories must be simplified and instilled in students in such a way that they abhor unbelief, polytheism and acts of disobedience; and instead are attracted to faith and belief. The stories must entrench belief in the greatness and lofty status of the Prophets ﷺ. All this must be done in a manner that is neither perceived as ungainly or coercive by the student. Rather, he must receive it unconsciously and in passing, and he must identify with it.[343]

Shaykh Nadwī compiled another collection for children titled *Qaṣaṣ min al-Tārīkh al-ʾIslāmī*. This too is written in simple language and an attractive style, bearing in mind the children's level of understanding, so that they enjoy the stories without losing interest.

He then put together *Mukhtārāt min ʾAdab al-ʿArab*, a collection in two parts of literary texts representing different examples from the first ʾIslāmic era till the present age. It was well received and widely used as a textbook in Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ and other ʾIslāmic institutes and universities. Shaykh Nadwī asked Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rābiʿ al-Ḥasanī Nadwī to prepare another collection for secondary students, which he did. His *Manthūrāt* was also well received. Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rābiʿ went on to write *al-ʾAdab al-ʿArabī Bayn ʿArḍ wa Naqd*, *Jazīrat al-ʿArab* and other books, enabling Nadwah to develop the syllabus further in line with its successful new approach.

That approach is best summarised by Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan himself:

> Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ was looking at teaching Arabic as a living and vibrant language in which the Arabs address themselves, making it a means of ʾIslāmic propagation and also creating in the students and graduates of the Arabic *madāris*

[343] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 145.

> the ability to speak, compose and write in Arabic. This movement was formed for this purpose and for the realisation of these plans.[344]
>
> It was by the inspiration of God that the graduates and administrators of this institute were able to set a syllabus for Arabic language and Arabic literature which combines religion and literature, firmly embedding and adorning the ʾIslāmic belief-system, and making it attractive to the youngsters in a manner that is not burdensome to them.[345]

Construction of the library

The library is an essential element of every scholarly institution, and Nadwah was no exception. However, the original library was humbly housed within a hall of the Dār al-ʿUlūm. The construction of a purpose built library was undertaken during the period that Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was the head of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. He invited Shaykh ʾAḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Mubārak, the Chief Judge of Abu Dhabi, to lay the foundation stone for this building.[346] The opening of the new library coincided with the ʾIslāmic Literature Council meeting on 27th February 1984 (25th Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1404 AH). The library was named ʿAllāmah Shiblī Nuʿmānī Library. Both Arab and non-Arab guests and visitors were impressed by the treasure-house of books and rare manuscripts it contained. Indeed, they were impressed by the general scholarly atmosphere of Nadwah. ʾUstādh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Rifāʿī wrote to Shaykh Nadwī on 29th March 1984 (26th Jumādā ʾĀkhar 1404 AH):

> The few days that I spent with you will never be forgotten. Had you not enabled me to see, with the aid of your generosity, all the great traces of the past that I saw in that Dār al-ʿUlūm, I would not have believed all that I saw of the past works of your forefathers and the immense academic contribution that God inspired you to make. This is indeed a great inspiration from God. All praise is due to God for His blessings to you and the Muslims in your country.
>
> Apart from this, I also had the opportunity of meeting a large number of *ʿulamāʾ* and men of letters whom we rarely meet except on such occasions [...] I returned to my country, my heart filled with admiration, appreciation and gratitude [...] Had it been possible for me, I would have spent some time in your beautiful country and in that rare academic climate so that I could be with you for a longer time, benefit from your knowledge, and access the valuable and rare manuscripts in the library; however, time was limited. Nevertheless, I am still desirous of obtaining copies of some of the manuscripts and some of the rare prints [...] I wonder if you found the opportunity to take a look at the communiqué I left with you.[347]

[344] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
[345] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *ʾAḍwāʾ ʿalā al-Ḥarakāt wa al-Daʿawāt*, p. 49.
[346] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil ʾAʿlām*, p. 72.
[347] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52.

Recognition of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ in India

Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ achieved remarkable success very soon after its inauguration, and this success was acknowledged and appreciated. When it published an article by Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, then a student, on *ḥadīth* and its sciences, Mawlānā ʾAlṭāf Ḥusayn Ḥālī happened to read it and wrote to ʿAllāmah Shiblī Nuʿmānī the following, "I am most pleased that the Dār al-ʿUlūm publicly presented a brilliant example of its educational system for the first time. May God bless it and its students. I hope, indeed I am convinced, that proficiency in the Arabic language and necessary knowledge of the English language will produce among our Indian Muslim population such capable authors and writers as modern English education has so far been unable to produce."[348]

For half a century Nadwah continued to make its substantial contribution to the educational and cultural life of the Muslims of India. Though known in some circles, it was by no means the household name that it was to become. Nadwah's fame spread across the country in the wake of Shaykh Nadwī's *daʿwah* on behalf of the Muslims and the wider society in India. The popularity of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ increased steadily from the time he became its head. The Muslims, attracted by its educational system and by the moderation and middle way for which it stood, hastened to send their children to study there. It became crowded with students and the administrators were forced to make extension after extension to its buildings. When they could no longer add extensions, they purchased large plots of land on the outskirts of Lucknow and there transferred their primary and secondary classes. At the same time, many ʾIslāmic *madāris* became officially associated with Nadwat al-ʿUlāmāʾ. Many branches were opened in different parts of India and also beyond in Bangladesh and Nepal. Every major city in every state of India now has one or more branches of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ.

International recognition of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ

Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ had direct contact with the Arab world since its inception. This contact became stronger after the visit of the great scholar Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā in 1912/1330 AH. In his writings, he informed the Arab world of the ideology and mission of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. The visit of the Grand Muftī of Palestine, Sayyid Muḥammad ʾAmīn al-Ḥusaynī, had a similar effect. This visit was witnessed by Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, which he reports in his biography:

> I heard about him when I was a youngster and student. I felt as if I was hearing about personalities of the past generation or looking at a shining star on the far horizon. God suddenly enabled me to meet him in Lucknow at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ when he

[348] *Majallat al-Nadwah* (June, 1905).

> visited India with his associate, ʾUstādh Muḥammad ʿAlī ʿAlūbah Bāshā in 1933/1351 AH, during a support-raising tour for the ʾIslāmic University which he intended to establish in Jerusalem. His visit to Lucknow was in the midst of this tour. It was like a dream come true. We invited him to Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ which he had come to know through books, newspapers and through his friend, ʿAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī. He accepted and welcomed this invitation as though he had been waiting for and expecting it. I will not forget that brilliant and splendid gathering in which the Grand Muftī spoke. He made a magnificent and solemn appearance, combining external and internal beauty; outward grace with awe, gravity and humility; the very image of an *ʿālim* in elegant and handsome robes. It was as if an angel descended from the heavens, or one of the Muslim kings of the past had come to life again. He was most probably in his forties at the time. I still remember the famous Arabic poem which he quoted while mentioning his visit to this place about which he had heard and read a lot:
>
> Till when we met, by God, my ears never heard anything as beautiful as what my eyes beheld.
>
> The first part of this poem reads as follows:
>
> The conversations of the travellers used to convey the best information about Jaʿfar ibn Falāḥ.[349]

After Shaykh Nadwī was appointed head of Nadwah, its fame spread by leaps and bounds in the Arab world. The general popularity with which God anointed him in the Arab and ʾIslāmic worlds gave prominence to the name of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ and Lucknow. When he invited Shaykh ʿAlī al-Ṭanṭāwī to attend the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ convention, the latter wrote to him thus, "I have received your noble letter in which you invite me to the Nadwah convention. I was being interviewed on radio when the presenter asked me, 'Which place is closest to your heart? And which place holds the sweetest memories for you?' He thought that I would say Damascus, my land, but he was surprised and astonished when I said, 'Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ in Lucknow.' He asked me, 'Where is Lucknow?' I replied, 'It is the city of ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī.' By God, you are the most well-known scholar in the Arab world, so much so that it [Lucknow] has become known through you!"[350]

From the strong and close contact of the graduates of Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ with the Arab and ʾIslāmic lands, writes the Shaykh, and from their direct study of articles and books authored by political leaders, educators, litterateurs and the educated class, they sensed "an inferiority complex regarding the eligibility of ʾIslām and its teachings to lead this modern age in the sciences, disciplines, industry and innovation." They read of the developments and revolutions which different peoples and societies had experienced and also "their statements that secularism is the only resort and

[349] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Shakhṣiyyāt wa Kutub*, pp. 124-25.
[350] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil ʾAʿlām*, pp. 128-29.

straightest path to steering peoples and countries". They also learned that "many Arab leaders and writers are victims of Arab nationalism, which is calling for a return to the era of ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*) in which there was no distinction between religions, and no distinction between belief and unbelief."

God inspired a group of graduates and affiliates to call towards clear and explicit ʾIslāmic *daᶜwah* and original, authentic ʾIslāmic thinking in the Arabic language. A clear and forceful ʾIslāmic periodical was issued from Dār al-ᶜUlūm, *al-Baᶜth al-ʾIslāmī*, and a fortnightly newspaper, *al-Rāʾid*. Similarly, the rector of the Dār al-ᶜUlūm wrote clear and forceful articles and books which earned the respect and acknowledgement of Arab readers.[351]

Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ Convention

One of the most important events in the history of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ was the International Educational Convention held between 31st October - 2nd November 1975 (25th-27th Shawwāl 1395 AH) on the occasion of its 85th anniversary. Shaykh Nadwī wanted to assemble the senior *ᶜulamāʾ* and propagators of the ʾIslāmic community for this occasion so they would see this unique institution with their own eyes, touch its vestiges with their own hands, assess its needs by themselves, and participate in establishing its future ambitions. The following letter from one of the leading figures who accepted Shaykh Nadwī's invitation, apart from its value as an illustration of the warmth and admiration for the Shaykh from a fellow-traveller, it illustrates how well the mission of Nadwah was understood and how much the far-sightedness of its policies were appreciated. It is written by Shaykh ᶜAbd ʾAllāh ibn Ḥumayd, a senior scholar of Najd:

May the peace, mercy and blessings of God be on you. I have received and read your honourable letter no. 1316, dated 13th May 1975 (2nd Jumādā al-ʾŪlā 1395 AH). First of all, I was most pleased to hear of your health and good condition. Secondly, I was pleased to hear about your decision to hold a convention for Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ from 31st October - 2nd November 1975 (25th-27th Shawwāl 1395 AH) on the occasion of it being 85 years since it commenced its ʾIslāmic academic activities.

The fact of the matter is that this would please every person who is proud of ʾIslām. In fact, it will please every Muslim. You will be appreciated for this international responsibility which entails serving the religion of God, the religion of ʾIslām which He chose Himself and did not accept any other. I feel that this gathering and assembly will strengthen the bonds of love, reinforce co-operation in the community, and strengthen the determination of the *ᶜulamāʾ* to continue their efforts and endeavours on behalf of this magnanimous Sharīᶜah.

As for your reference to the efforts of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, this is known and perceived by all, and its impact is clear and manifest. The results and benefits have manifested themselves, and why should this not be the case when such a lengthy time

[351] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *ʾAḍwāʾ ᶜalā al-Ḥarakāt wa al-Daᶜawāt*, pp. 47-48.

has passed in its remarkable effort and continuous struggle through your guidance? All praise is due to God; you are from among those who are known for their moderation, balance and brilliant ʾIslāmic focus.

As for your invitation to attend this auspicious convention, it pleases me greatly. And why should this not be the case when I will be able to meet my brothers and beloved ones for the sake of God, and with whom I will gather for the bond of knowledge and brotherhood. Through the power and might of God, I will make every effort to attend your blessed convention and gathering. I hope that fate does not think otherwise. If compelling reasons do not permit me to attend, my heart and my thoughts will be with you.

Finally, I ask God to crown your work with success, and that this gathering be a source of goodness and blessing for ʾIslām, for the help of the religion of God, and for elevating His word. My inspiration is from none other than God. It is in Him that I place my trust and to Him I turn. May God protect you. May the peace, mercy and blessings of God be on you. ᶜAbd ʾAllāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd."[352]

A very large number of senior figures among the scholars and *duᶜāt* in the Arab and ʾIslāmic worlds attended, notably: Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd the previous Shaykh al-ʾAzhar; Shaykh Dr Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī who was at the time Egyptian Minister of Endowments; Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī; Shaykh ᶜAbd ʾAllāh ibn ʾIbrāhīm al-ʾAnṣārī; Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Muᶜizz ᶜAbd al-Sattār and Shaykh ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz al-Mubārak, who was the Chief Judge of the Emirates. The convention was an historic event for the Muslims of India and a great festive occasion. When the guests reached Delhi in different delegations, the Muslims welcomed them at Delhi airport. Then, when they disembarked at Lucknow airport, a welcoming crowd received them with garlands of flowers. The Muslims of Lucknow and of India in general were at their service. Almost every Indian city sent its representative, as if to acknowledge that these were guests of the whole Muslim population of India. They therefore went to great pains to be hospitable to them. Dr Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Badrī jokingly said, "The only thing left is for Shaykh Nadwī to get every guest married to an Indian Muslim woman!"[353]

In Nadwah itself, massive tents capable of holding thousands were pitched. Non-Muslims as well as Muslims attended. The Hindus realised from the massive preparations that senior figures from the Arab and ʾIslāmic worlds were going to attend, and were eager to take part in welcoming them. Thousands attended the celebration and many of them did so to pay tribute to Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan because of the high position he held in India. It was the first time that the Shaykh permitted photographers to attend and take pictures of the gathering, guests and speakers. The *ᶜulamāʾ* of India do not normally permit photography. However, on this occasion, because of the

[352] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil ʾAᶜlām*, pp. 50-52.

[353] Source: author's own quote of Shaykh Nadwī's recollection.

Arab *ᶜulamāᵓ* present, Shaykh Nadwī allowed it, out of respect for their opinion as to its permissibility.

The norm on such occasions was for the host to preside. However, Shaykh Nadwī insisted that it must be chaired by the Shaykh al-ᵓAzhar, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd. Several guests delivered speeches and were introduced by the master of ceremonies. However, there were two speakers whom Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan wanted to introduce himself. One was Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Fattāḥ ᵓAbū Ghuddah, whom the *ᶜulamāᵓ* of India knew through his academic work and his recognition of the work of the *ᶜulamāᵓ* of India, especially of the famous scholar of Lucknow, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy Lakhnawī, whose contributions such as *al-Rafᶜ wa al-Takmīl fī al-Jarḥ wa al-Taᶜdīl* and other works Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Fattāḥ had published and copiously annotated. The other was Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, about whom Shaykh Nadwī spoke in glowing terms. Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī delivered an impromptu but powerful and scintillating speech before the huge crowd. It made a great impression on the audience. It was spoken from the depths of the heart and could therefore touch the hearts of others. Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan said to him afterwards, "You will be surprised to know that the Hindus who attended this session were affected by your speech even though they did not understand it."

In his own welcome speech Shaykh Nadwī presented a brief history of the ᵓIslāmic presence in India and the educational and cultural role of Muslims. He commenced with these words:

> I welcome you to a land where a unique experience in the history of religions, civilisations and cultures was achieved, and which realised an unprecedented success. It was the experience of the arrival of a religion which was accompanied with knowledge and civilisation, and a special programme for life. It was not attached to a language, science, civilisation, nationality, race, habit or custom. This experience proved itself in the intrinsic power of the nature of ᵓIslām, its ability to awaken talents, open up dispositions, unearth treasures, utilise human ability for the well-being of humanity, and respond to the human temperament. As though this land was waiting and yearning for this experience, and fully understood and was congruent with it. In like manner, it proved the fertility of the soil and the nobility of the ground, and that ᵓIslāmic sciences produce leaves and bear fruit in every environment and climate. At times ᵓIslām flourishes even more and produces more fruit if it is planted in a virgin land, and receives good grafting and sound pollination. The perception that it is in a strange land, far away from the centre of this guidance and the origin of this caravan, with no hope of receiving supplies and help, having full reliance on the help of God alone, and then reliance on the message which this colony of foreigners brought, its eligibility to remain, its benefit to suffering humanity, and its perception that it is on a border far from the centre of ᵓIslām which God asked it to defend and guard. All of this instils a power in this colony which produces miracles and extraordinary feats. It overpowers every opposition, conspiracy and antagonism, it belies the experiences of nations, rejects materialistic logic rooted in maths and the philosophy of numbers and which believes in the subjugation of the finale to the prelude, and the ends to the means.

Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan concluded his address by saying:

> Today, the Indian Muslim population has become self-sufficient with ᵓIslām. It obtains its strength and resistance from the original fountains of ᵓIslām, such as the Qurᵓān, Sunnah, following the first caravan of Muslims with its *jihād*, loyalty, acts of bravery, following the life of the pious predecessors who fully understood ᵓIslām, embodied its teachings, and remained steadfast on the path. The Indian Muslim attached his belief, life and behaviour to ᵓIslām, and did not attach it to the ᵓIslām of Arabs or non-Arabs. You will not find a person saying, "If the people believe, we will believe. If they disbelieve, we will disbelieve. If they remain steadfast, we will remain steadfast. If they deviate, we will deviate." He does not precondition his loyalty to ᵓIslām with the loyalty of any ᵓIslāmic community. Instead, he considers it his duty, and a form of gratitude for the bounty of *ᵓīmān*, for there is no greater bounty. He supplicates to God that he remains devoted to ᵓIslām, taking pride in the civilisation and philosophy of ᵓIslām, holding on to the ᵓIslāmic religion as a complete religion which steers life in its entirety, and guides all eras and societies at a time when many believe in their nationalisms and bygone civilisations, archaic and modern philosophies opposed to ᵓIslām or in opposition to ᵓIslām. The Indian Muslim is encouraged to remain steadfast on principles, values and lofty ideals, irrespective of their value for the material life and favourable opportunities, until he is able to address his Lord and say:
>
> > I desire that You are sweet while life is bitter. I desire that You are pleased while the people are displeased. I desire that the distance between me and You is civilised while the distance between me and the world is wilderness. If I have really acquired Your love, then everything else is insignificant. And everything above the dust is merely dust."[354]

After the speeches had finished, members of the convention divided into committees, one of them to discuss education and training, another to discuss general implementation of the recommendations of the convention. The convention was a great success and unprecedented in the history of India, especially as regards the large number of Arab *ᶜulamāᵓ*, litterateurs, *duᶜāt* and thinkers. The Indian government officially hosted a number of the guests; Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, Shaykh al-Dhahabī, Shaykh al-ᵓAnṣārī, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Muᶜizz and Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī were among them, as a way of honouring Shaykh Nadwī and acknowledging his status in the ᵓIslāmic world. The President of the Republic, Dr Dhākir Ḥusayn, invited the guests for lunch, and then a number of parliamentarians accompanied the guests on a tour of the famous sites, the Red Fort in Delhi, the Qutb Minar and the like. The biggest tourist attraction was the Taj Mahal, for which special vehicles were provided. The guests were astonished to learn that all the major tourist attractions which symbolise India to the wider world and of which it is proud are ᵓIslāmic landmarks.

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[354] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Muslimūn fī al-Hind*, pp. 227-39.

The favour of the Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ movement

The favour of the Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ movement to India and to the Arab and ᵓIslāmic world is clear. It produced men who were among the best examples of contemporary Muslim scholars, who left their mark on the ᵓIslāmic sciences, ᵓIslāmic history, Arabic and Urdu literature, and ᵓIslāmic *daᶜwah*. Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan said in this regard:

> The leaders of this ideology and graduates of its madrasah, Dār al-ᶜUlūm Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ, had significant merit in spreading ᵓIslāmic culture, presenting the life of the Messenger ﷺ, and the attractions and teachings of ᵓIslām in a vibrant contemporary style and a new garment. The academic and literary works of ᶜAllāmah Shiblī Nuᶜmānī made a great impact in invigorating the new generation with confidence in the ᵓIslāmic culture and removing their inferiority complex. The following books and articles of his are worthy of mention in this regard: *Sīrat al-Nabī* ﷺ, *al-Fārūq, al-Ghazzālī, al-Rūmī, al-Jizyah fī al-ᵓIslām, Maktabat al-ᵓIskandariyyah* and *Naẓrat Tārīkhiyyah ᶜalā ᶜĀlamgīr*. Similarly, his distinguished student, ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī made a great contribution in this regard. The four volumes with which he completed the book *Sīrat al-Nabī* ﷺ was a vast encyclopaedia on the biography of the Prophet ﷺ and the science of *tawḥīd*. His book, *Khuṭubāt Madras*, is considered the most powerful and most beautiful writing on the biography of the Prophet ﷺ. The same is true of his books on ᵓIslāmic personalities and his scholarly investigations. He took an active part in the academic, literary and political movement of the country. This participation earned for the *ᶜulamāᵓ* the respect of the modern educated class and the people of science and literature, and distanced the accusation of *seclusion* with which some of the *ᶜulamāᵓ* were charged during the last era of regress. The periodical, *al-Maᶜārif* - which he edited - was considered to be the most progressive academic ᵓIslāmic periodical in the ᵓIslāmic world.[355]

His teaching at Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ

ᶜAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, the head of educational affairs at Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ, recognised the talent, competence and dedication of Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan. Following a decision of the Educational Assembly, the young ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan, then just twenty, was appointed as a teacher of Qurᵓānic sciences, *tafsīr* and Arabic literature. He started teaching in August 1934 (Jumādā al-ᵓŪlā 1353 AH). Besides Arabic language and the history of Arabic literature, he taught *tafsīr* of the first ten *ᵓajzāᵓ* of the Qurᵓān, the books of *ᵓĪmān* and *ᶜIlm* from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the second volume of *Jāmiᶜ al-Tirmidhī*, the first part of Muḥammad al-Khuḍrī's *Tārīkh al-Duwal al-ᵓIslāmiyyah*, the chapters on *al-ᵓAdab*, *al-Nasīb* and *al-Marāthī* from *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*,

[355] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-Ṣirāᶜ Bayn al-Fikrah al-ᵓIslāmiyyah wa al-Fikrah al-Gharbiyyah*, pp. 68-69.

al-Qirāᵓat al-Rashīdah, *Ḥikāyāt al-ᵓAṭfāl*, and logic from ᵓUstādh Nadhīr ᵓAḥmad's *Mabādiᵓ al-Ḥikmah*.

He adopted different teaching methods to suit the needs of the subject and his students. For the Arabic language, he adopted the direct method, i.e. without using Urdu as a medium, and without going into too much detail about rules. He informed his teacher, Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, of his progress and sought his advice. Shaykh al-Hilālī replied:

> As to the unexpected success of the students on account of your adoption of the method which I had previously initiated [i.e. the direct method of teaching Arabic], I am not, after all, so surprised. *ᵓIn shāᵓ ᵓAllāh*, there will be even greater success in the future. I had many high hopes for my work in India had it not been for the lack of resources which prevented me from realising those hopes. Everything is realised gradually. As for limiting the vocabulary which is taught in the early classes [...] I think that for a beginner 200 words comprising nouns and verbs is sufficient. Thereafter the words could be 300 in number. In this way, as the student progresses, the vocabulary could be increased little by little. The student should not be made to merely memorize the words because this is of no benefit. Instead, sentences must be composed with these words and these must be divided into three basic lessons. A sentence should not be longer than a few lines. You must then pose questions and provide answers. Then you have questions without answers, where the student must answer the questions. Using pictures has a great advantage.[356]

Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan was gracious in accepting criticism. When he learned that students in his *tafsīr* classes wanted him to broaden the range of references, he did so, bringing in sources like *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī, *Maᶜālim al-Tanzīl* of al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr al-Manār* and *Tarjumān al-Qurᵓān* of ᵓAbū al-Kalām ᵓĀzād.[357]

The transition from student to teacher and adapting to the style and temperament of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ did not require from him a "scholarly emigration or a long intellectual journey". Rather, as he put it, "I felt that I merely moved from one room of the house to another room":

> One of the other reasons behind this was that I had lived in the academic and intellectual environment of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ and in its shade from the very beginning. My ears were filled, from a tender age, with stories and incidents which introduced me to the history of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ and its senior founders, and made me familiar with its views and opinions. My tutor and main supervisor was my elder brother; my beloved and affectionate teacher was Shaykh Khalīl ibn Muḥammad al-Yamānī; and my other teacher was my uncle Sayyid Ṭalḥah al-Ḥasanī, who contributed to some aspects of my academic training. Each of them had qualified from Nadwah, eaten of its fruits, and benefited from it.[358]

[356] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rasāᵓil al-ᵓAᶜlām*, pp. 17-18.
[357] ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 182.
[358] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

He served in Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ for ten years, contributing much to the design of curricula and an environment conducive to teaching and studying Arabic and acquiring a refined literary, scholarly and religious taste. He resigned in 1944/1363 AH under the pressure of his other commitments to *daʿwah* and writing. However, he maintained a close link with Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ and always made himself available for consultation and counsel. His effectiveness as a teacher may be gauged from this tribute from one of his students, Dr ʿAbd ʾAllāh ʿAbbās Nadwī:

> How excellent the days were that I spent in the atmosphere of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ during the years 1940-44/1359-63 AH. […] Divine mercy enabled us students to open our eyes to the Qurʾān lessons of our great shaykh, ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī Nadwī […] His agreeable voice, genuine feeling, pure mind, strong perception, and distinctive zeal in explaining the concept of *tawḥīd* would take hold of our senses. We never saw any compromise in him when it came to ʾIslāmic beliefs, and he was extremely firm on the truth. When we became older and our horizons expanded, we studied the books of the pious predecessors such as the *ʾAʾimmah*: Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim, Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, their writings only served to establish and confirm what our Shaykh had embedded in us. This, despite the fact that he was still a young man who hadn't reached the age of thirty when he was teaching us the Qurʾān. He embedded in us the love for God, for His religion, and for His Messenger ﷺ. O God, reward him with every good on our behalf.[359]

His students

Over the ten years that he taught at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, hundreds of students benefited from his efforts in teaching and *daʿwah* in different parts of the world. A large number of people read the *ʾAwāʾil*, the opening *ʾaḥadīth* of the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* and of the *Musnad* of ʾImām ʾAḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and Shaykh Nadwī authorised them to transmit them from him. I provide below brief notes on a few of his most senior students, followed by a list of the well-known people who received *ʾijāzah* from him.

ʿAllāmah Muḥammad al-Rābiʿ al-Ḥasanī Nadwī

ʿAllāmah Muḥammad al-Rābiʿ ibn Rashīd ʾAḥmad al-Ḥasanī Nadwī was born in 1929/1347 AH. He specialised in Arabic literature, excelled in it, and was well-known for his expertise in this field. He was the closest of all to Shaykh Nadwī and succeeded him as head of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ and of the Muslim Personal Law Board. Among his books are: *al-ʾUmmah al-ʾIslāmiyyah wa Munajjazātuhā, al-Tarbiyah wa al-Mujtamaʿ, al-Thaqāfat al-ʾIslāmiyyah wa al-Wāqiʿ al-Muʿāṣir, Manthūrāt min ʾAdab al-ʿArab, al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī Bayn ʿArḍ wa Naqd, Tārīkh al-ʾAdab al-ʿArabī wa al-ʿAṣr al-ʾIslāmī, al-ʾAdab*

[359] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Madkhal ʾilā Dirāsat al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿIlmī, 1994), Introduction, pp. 3-4.

al-ʾIslāmī wa Ṣilatuh bi al-Ḥayāh, Mukhtār al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī, al-ʿĀlam al-ʾIslāmī al-Yawm, Rawāʾiʿ min al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī al-Qadīm, al-Muslimūn wa al-Tarbiyah, Muwāfaqāt wa Mufāraqāt fī al-Muduniyyat al-Gharbiyyah, al-Dīn wa al-ʾAdab and *Jazīrat al-ʿArab*. He wrote many other valuable books in both Arabic and Urdu, and hundreds of academic and literary articles and essays. He counts among his many blessings from God the *ʾijāzāt* that he received from three senior scholars: ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī Nadwī; the great *ḥadīth* scholar and *ʿālim*, Shaykh Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhalawī; and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʾAbū Ghuddah.

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ʾUstādh ʾAbū Jaʿfar Muḥammad Wāḍiḥ Rashīd al-Ḥasanī Nadwī is a great scholar and man of letters, professor of Arabic language and literature, and editor of *al-Rāʾid*, a newspaper published by Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. He is known for his understanding and practice of ʾIslām, and for his intelligence, wisdom and noble character. He is famous for his humility, abstention from vain pastimes, safeguarding of time, brevity in speech, aloofness from ostentation and ceremony, seclusion (unless teaching and tutoring when he pours out his love for his students, advising them and remaining open and free for them). People unanimously acknowledge and speak of his excellent qualities, and pay tribute to his position. I have not come across anyone like him, nor know anyone as competent in explaining contemporary ʾIslāmic history, understanding contemporary issues, explaining ʾIslāmic thought and the need to purify and cleanse it from flaws. He had the same teachers as his brother, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rābiʿ al-Ḥasanī Nadwī. He wrote, among other works, *ʾAdab al-Ṣaḥwat al-ʾIslāmiyyah, al-Shiʿr al-ʾIslāmī* and *Manhaj ʿUlamāʾ al-Hind fī al-Tarbiyyat al-ʾIslāmiyyah*.

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ʿAllāmah Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAlī, studied Arabic literature and writing under his uncle, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan and resembled him in his writing style. He initiated the periodical, *al-Baʿth al-ʾIslāmī* and remained its editor till the end of his life. He died in June 1979 (Rajab 1399 AH) when he was 44 years old. He left behind three sons, Sayyid ʿAbd ʾAllāh, Sayyid ʿAmmār and Sayyid Bilāl, and the following books: *al-ʾIslām al-Mumtaḥan, Miṣr Tatanaffas, Tanāqud Taḥār fīh al-ʿUyūn, Ḥayāt al-Sayyid Muḥammad ʿAlī Mongerī* and *Rawdād Jaman*.

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ʿAllāmah Saʿīd al-Raḥmān al-ʾAʿẓamī, the great litterateur and orator, studied under his father, Shaykh Muḥaddith ʾAyyūb al-ʾAʿẓamī, and then studied Arabic under ʿAllāmah Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī and Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. He

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al-ʾIslāmī wa Ṣilatuh bi al-Ḥayāh, *Mukhtār al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī*, *al-ʿĀlam al-ʾIslāmī al-Yawm*, *Rawāʾiʿ min al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī al-Qadīm*, *al-Muslimūn wa al-Tarbiyah*, *Muwāfaqāt wa Mufāraqāt fī al-Muduniyyat al-Gharbiyyah*, *al-Dīn wa al-ʾAdab* and *Jazīrat al-ʿArab*. He wrote many other valuable books in both Arabic and Urdu, and hundreds of academic and literary articles and essays. He counts among his many blessings from God the *ʾijāzāt* that he received from three senior scholars: ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī Nadwī; the great *ḥadīth* scholar and *ʿālim*, Shaykh Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhalawī; and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʾAbū Ghuddah.

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wrote the book *Shuᶜarāᵓ al-Rasūl* ﷺ. He is the current principal of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ and editor of the periodical, *al-Baᶜth al-ᵓIslāmī.*

Muftī Muḥammad Ẓahūr Nadwī

The great jurist and muftī, Shaykh Muḥammad Ẓahūr Nadwī al-ᵓAᶜẓamī ibn ᶜAbd al-Sattār ibn Khān Muḥammad, was born in 1927/1345 AH in Mubārakpūr in ᵓAᶜẓamgarh. He studied in Madrasah ᵓIḥyāᵓ al-ᶜUlūm in Mubārakpūr and at Dār al-ᶜUlūm Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ. He studied *Hidāyat al-Fiqh* under Muftī Muḥammad Saᶜīd, who was married to his sister, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* under Shaykh ᵓIsḥāq Sandīlwī, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* under Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Bastawī, *Sharḥ al-Tahdhīb* under Shaykh ᵓAbū ᶜIrfān Nadwī, the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* under Shāh Ḥalīm ᶜAṭā, *Sunan ᵓAbū Dāwūd* under Shaykh ᵓIsḥāq Sandīlwī, books of Arabic literature under Shaykh Muḥammad Nāẓim Nadwī, *Mukhtārāt min ᵓAdab al-ᶜArab* and *ᶜUlūm al-Qurᵓān* under Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan, *Jāmiᶜ al-Tirmidhī* under Shaykh Saᶜīd ᵓAḥmad, *Ḥujjat ᵓAllāh al-Bālighah* under Shāh Ḥalīm ᶜAṭāᵓ, and the muftī course under Shaykh Muftī Muḥammad Saᶜīd. Shaykh Ẓahūr Nadwī has held the post of Muftī at Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāᵓ since 1956/1375 AH.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṭāhir Manṣūrpūrī

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad Yūnus, a righteous scholar and distinguished administrator, was born 1930/1349 AH. He studied *al-Jāmiᶜ al-Ṣaghīr* under ᶜAllāmah Muḥammad Yūsuf Kāndhalawī; *Qaṣīdah al-Burdah, Qaṣīdah Kaᶜb ibn Zuhayr* and *Sharḥ al-Mullā ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī ᶜalā Kāfiyat Ibn Ḥājib* under Shaykh ᵓInᶜām Ḥasan; *Mukhtaṣar al-Maᶜānī, Sharḥ al-Wiqāyah* and *Nūr al-ᵓAnwār* under ᶜAllāmah ᶜUbayd ᵓAllāh al-Balyāwī; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Sunan ᵓAbī Dāwūd* under Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhalawī; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* under Shaykh Manẓūr ᵓAḥmad Sahāranpūrī; *Jāmiᶜ al-Tirmidhī* under Shaykh ᵓAḥmad Saᶜīd; *Sunan al-Nasāᵓī, Sunan Ibn Mājah* and *Maᶜānī al-ᵓĀthār* of ᵓImām ᵓAbū Jaᶜfar al-Ṭaḥāwī under Shaykh ᵓAsᶜad ᵓAllāh. He studied Qurᵓānic sciences under Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan.

Those who narrated from Shaykh Nadwī

There are many from all walks of life who narrate from Shaykh ᵓAbū al-Ḥasan with his *ᵓijāzah.*[360] The following senior figures have narrated from him: Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Fattāḥ ᵓAbū Ghuddah, ᶜAllāmah Muḥaddith ᶜAlī al-Murād al-Ḥamawī, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ᶜAwwāmah, Shaykh

[360] He gave *ᵓijāzah* to Muḥammad ibn ᶜAbd Allah al-Rashīd and his sons ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz and Nawwāf. And it is my honour to record that he also gave *ᵓijāzah* to myself more than once; to my brother Muḥammad Muzzamil Nadwī; to my sisters ᵓAsmāᵓ, ᶜĀṣimah and Ṣāᵓimah; and to my daughters Ḥusnā, Sumaiya, Hāla, Maryam and Fāṭimah.

Muḥaddith Muḥammad Yūnus Jawnpūrī, ᶜAllāmah Muḥaddith ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh ibn ᶜAbd al-Qādir al-Talīdī, Shaykh Sayyid Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlawī al-Mālikī al-Ḥasanī, ᶜAllāmah ᵓAḥmad Sardār al-Ḥalabī, Shaykh ᵓAbū ᶜAmmār Zāhid al-Rāshidī, Shaykh Muḥammad ᵓAbū al-Hudā al-Yaᶜqūbī, Sayyid ᵓIbrāhīm ibn ᶜAbd ᵓAllāh al-Khalīfah al-Ḥasanī al-ᵓAḥsāᵓī, Shaykh al-Nashūqātī and his son ᶜUmar, Shaykh ᵓAḥmad Mukhtār Ramzī, Shaykh Majd Makkī, Shaykh ᵓAḥmad ibn Salīm al-Ḥamāmī, Shaykh Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad ibn ᵓAbī Bakr al-Mullā, Sayyid Muḥammad ᶜAdnān al-Majd al-Ḥasanī, ᵓUstādh ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad Ḥasan Hilāl, Shaykh Muṣṭafā ibn ᶜAbd al-Karīm Nadwī al-Miṣrī, Shaykh ᶜAlī ᵓAḥmad Nadwī, Shaykh ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-ᶜUthmān, Shaykh ᵓAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Malik ᶜĀshūr, Dr Muḥammad Muṭīᶜ al-Ḥāfiẓ and Shaykh Muḥammad Riyāḍ al-Māliḥ.

VI. HIS LEADERSHIP

God enabled Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan to serve ʾIslām and the Muslims in several fields. In this chapter we look at his role as a leader and guide in India, notably, his supervision of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ and his chairmanship of the Muslim Personal Law Board, and in the wider ʾIslāmic world, through his *daʿwah* in the Arab lands, his leadership of the Muslim World League, and his contribution through his writing and speeches to education and training. As we shall see, his commitment to these efforts was not marred by the least trace of self-importance or self-promotion; rather, his success depended on and derived from his reliance on God and his compassionate concern for the needs and aspirations of the Muslims. He followed the advice he gave to others:

> It is essential that our lives not be deprived of showing concern for the Muslims, sharing their worries, their joys and the realities of their lives, as nations, countries and societies. We must live with them, no matter where we are, in their pains, hopes, emotions and sentiments. It is stated in an authentic *ḥadīth*, "You will see the believers in mutual compassion, mutual love and mutual affection like a single body. When one part of the body has a complaint, the entire body responds with sleeplessness and fever."[361] The bitter realities of their life must settle sorrow in ours, the humiliation they have to suffer must cloud the mirror of our lives, the oppression which they have to suffer must arouse in us religious ardour and ʾIslāmic honour. We must fulfil our ʾIslāmic and brotherly obligation as much as possible.[362]

His leadership of Muslims in India

Shaykh Nadwī grew up at a time when India was a colony of the British, who had ousted the authority of the Muslims and regarded them with suspicion. Once the *untouchables* were counted with the Hindus, the Muslims vis-à-vis the Hindus, were a religious minority and their distinct identity and culture came under constant pressure. India's independence in 1947/1366 AH came at the cost of partition, and those Muslims who remained became an oppressed minority whose crises and hardships multiplied. India is formally a secular, democratic country, committed to treat all its citizens equally without discrimination on the basis of faith, race, class or gender. Its constitution, recognising the religious and cultural rights of minorities, has the potential to create harmony and unity among its different peoples and communities. However, once the generation that led the movement for independence and

[361] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-ʾAdab*, b. *Raḥmat al-Nās*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, k. *al-Bir*, b. *Tarāḥum al-Muʾminīn*.
[362] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-ʿAqīdah wa al-ʿIbādah wa al-Sulūk* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿIlmī, 1983), p. 226.

had claimed to serve the constitution passed, sectarian movements and political parties arose, openly expressing hatred of ʾIslām and Muslims and calling for the obliteration of the ʾIslāmic presence, actual and historical. Some openly rejected the secular constitution and agitated for the establishment of a Hindu state and the imposition of Hindu culture on all citizens. Behind the scenes, many in government, for a variety of motives, gave support to this agenda. As a consequence, the popularity of this agenda spread; behind the political parties, informal militias were established which attacked and plundered Muslims and, wherever they could, stirred up communal riots. The media either supported or made no effort to criticise such incidents; moreover, the security forces looked the other way. School and college textbooks, as well as popular newspapers and magazines, were increasingly filled with sectarian material, designed to arouse hatred of Muslims and ʾIslām.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan realised that if the right actions were not taken, the Muslims would be in great danger of developing a distorted, narrow identity or losing their identity altogether. In spite of his other commitments in teaching and writing, he toured the country's cities and villages, urging the Muslims to *ʾīmān*, upright character, and noble ʾIslāmic behaviour, and to redouble their efforts to revive ʾIslāmic education. He warned them of the conspiracies against them and urged a wise and resolute patience in the face of increasing hardships. His lessons, lectures, speeches, meetings, words of advice and admonition, comfort and encouragement spurred the people, especially the youth and ʾIslāmic workers, to take responsibility, to fulfil the role expected of them. Despite their various factions and the physical distances that divided them, Shaykh Nadwī was able to identify and strengthen the points of unity and common purpose. He did so through the expenditure of immense personal energy, through his patience, mildness and a forbearance rooted in his own clear and firm faith.

By the end of his life, he was a voice for all the Muslims of India. Whether they were in the east or west, north or south, the masses or the elite, *traditional* or *modernist*, religiously devout or non-devout, leaders of religious and educational centres, members of reform movements, or political activists, people of all levels of society respected him and had confidence in his counsel. In fact, even the Hindus came to respect and admire him, and government officials recognised his merit as a leader, one who was to be trusted and listened to.

The important steps he took in India comprise several key elements; disseminating religious knowledge among the Muslims, acquainting them with their history and civilisation, urging the conservation of their ʾIslāmic identity while ridding their beliefs and practices of pagan accretions, and striving to earn the respect and trust of the Hindu population.

The dissemination of religious knowledge

Notwithstanding India's secularist constitution, those who designed educational syllabi and the authors of textbooks for use in the different states, especially in the northern states, adopted and promoted the religion, religious symbols and stories, and the values, of the Hindu majority. Since the syllabuses and textbooks were compulsory, Muslim pupils were taught about the gods and fables, the sanctity and divinity accorded to certain rivers and cities, the temples, ceremonies, festivities, customs of religious and spiritual centres, in the Hindu tradition and, importantly, as if no other tradition existed in the country. The history books prescribed for students excluded - for the most part deliberately - the great figures and achievements of the centuries of ʾIslāmic presence in India; if mentioned at all, Muslims were represented in these books as foreigners and outsiders to the land and its complex story. ʾIslām itself was presented negatively, and its great figures, even the person of God's Messenger ﷺ, were portrayed in ways that could only injure the sentiments and offend the dignity of Muslims.

The prevalence of such books in a compulsory educational system, in the absence of a balanced influence on the minds of Muslim children and youth, was a matter of grave concern. Muslims feared for their faith and identity and the likelihood that, for all practical purposes, their children would quit the religion and culture of ʾIslām. Signs of this future apostasy were already apparent among those exposed to this education and cut off from an ʾIslāmic education. Young Muslim children had begun expressing Brahmin sentiments and holding some Brahmin beliefs.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan attended a huge conference in Bastī, Uttar Pradesh, 30th December 1959 - 1st January 1960 (29th Jumādā ʾĀkhar 1379 AH - 2nd Rajab 1379 AH), with a large number of *ʿulamāʾ* from every juridical and scholarly school, and representatives from different classes of society. They called on the government to reform the official educational system and remove lessons that conflicted with and undermined ʾIslāmic teachings and values. They resolved to set up after-hours schools to cater for the religious needs of Muslim children, and to establish new schools that combined an acceptable educational syllabus in the different subjects alongside the teaching of ʾIslām. This conference made a huge impact in ʾIslāmic circles; branches were established in different parts of the country and other major conferences were held to protect and promote ʾIslāmic education for the country's Muslim population.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan headed the religious education movement which prioritised primary school children, laying secure foundations for education at a higher level. This movement succeeded in establishing thousands of schools in different villages and cities of India, which provided Muslim children with ʾIslāmic teachings and protected them from cultural dissolution.

Shaykh Nadwī undertook to prepare a syllabus that combined ʾIslāmic studies with modern subjects, including social sciences. He also assisted the modern educational institutes of the Muslims in India, such as Aligarh Muslim University, which, ever since Independence, had struggled to protect their ʾIslāmic identity.

His educational vision for the Muslims of India becomes clear from a speech he gave as the chair of the ʾIslāmic Education Conference, 4th-5th June 1961 (19th-20th Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1380 AH) in Lucknow. He asked those attending to make this lifelong pledge to God and to themselves:

> We must believe that this country, India, is our country and our homeland, and we will live in it like sons, our duty to this country is no less than that of its most important and most elderly citizen. The greatest figure in India, whether the President of the Republic of India or the Prime Minister, cannot claim that his right in this country is greater than our right in it.
>
> We make a pledge that we will live in this country with all the features special to our religion, ʾIslāmic civilisation, religious symbols, social character and Muslim identity. We will not abandon any of our symbols nor leave out any part thereof. It is forbidden to us to live stripped of any of these symbols, this civilisation and this identity. There will be no enjoyment in life and no goodness in it without this. If we are unable to transmit our religious ideology and heritage to our children and we do not teach them, as is our duty, our ʾIslāmic teachings and beliefs, then let alone being the life of righteous Muslims, it is not the life of noble and free people. It is the life of beasts and cattle, the life of oxen, donkeys and dogs.[363]

Protecting ʾIslāmic identity

A conspicuous vehicle, symbol and measure of ʾIslāmic identity and presence in India is the Urdu language and its extensive literature. Compounded from the Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages, Urdu served to represent and facilitate a unified administration for India, before the era of British rule. The Muslims had adopted it as their religious and cultural language. Article 343 of the Constitution of Independent India made Hindi in the Sanskrit script the official language of the Republic, recognising Urdu among the regional languages. Every language spoken by a sizeable population was to be recognised and its community provided with all facilities to teach it to their children if they wished. However, the states under the central government, especially Uttar Pradesh, considered to be the heartland of Urdu where it was nurtured and flourished, cancelled Urdu as a subject and as a medium of instruction in nursery schools, and removed it totally from primary schools.

The Muslims considered this a threatening development. The reason is that Urdu was the only means which bound them, through the Arabic script, to the Qurʾān and the study of works written in Arabic and Persian. All the

[363] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Muslimūn fī al-Hind*, pp. 240-42.

Indian Muslims' arts, culture and history were recorded in Urdu. If they were cut off from this language and became ignorant of it, it would mean being cut off from their culture and their past. Under the leadership of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī and other Muslims, several meetings and discussions with government officials were held to reverse this situation. However, their efforts on the whole did not produce results and they recieved only promises from the politicians which proved to be empty.

When the Hindu government made it compulsory to sing the national anthem, whose words are saturated with allusions to fables and mythical figures and imply belief in and celebration of such entities, the Muslims objected strongly. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan stood firmly against the government's decree on this point and eventually compelled it to retract. In his main address at the Muslim Personal Law Board meeting held in Mumbai, 28th-30th October 1999 (18th-20th Rajab 1420 AH), he said, "We will never accept the imposition of a social system, secular system or personal law upon us. We consider that to be a call to apostasy. We will combat it, as the calls towards apostasy are combated. This is our right of citizenship, our democratic right and our religious right."[364]

Shaykh Nadwī often reminded the Muslims of the famous observation attributed to the great Companion, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ ﷺ, "You are forever in a fort because of the numerous enemies around you and because their hearts hanker after you." He explained its meaning in one of his speeches:

> What ʿAmr ﷺ actually said to them was this; Do not incline towards resting, do not lay down your weapons, and do not consider yourselves to have dusted off the dirt of battle with every right to live like conquerors and rulers. No! You are forever in a fort. You are surrounded by enemies just as the tongue is surrounded by teeth. You are a handful of people, a drop immersed in this huge ocean of different nations, religions, civilisations in the African continent which is like a world to itself. You can never incline towards resting or sleeping like conquerors on the couches of proud kings.[365]

The issue of ʾIslāmic identity occupied Shaykh Nadwī throughout his life. He held many conferences and national meetings for this purpose, and made rousing speeches to motivate resistance and resolve among the Muslims. He did this on numerous occasions. One of the earliest was the ʾIslāmic Education Conference, which he organised and held in Lucknow from 4th-5th June 1961 (16th-17th Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1380 AH). Addressing his fellow-Muslims, he said on that occasion:

> O Brothers! We make a firm pledge in this last part of the night in which the mercy of God descends, when hearts are pure and supplications are accepted, that we

[364] Bilāl al-Ḥasanī, *Sawāniḥ Mufakkir ʾIslām* (Raebareli, 2000), p. 479.
[365] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Nafahāt al-ʾĪmān* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿIlmī, 1984), pp. 33-34.

> will live in this country with our ʾIslām and the ʾIslām of our forthcoming generations. We will spend everything, precious or not, for that purpose, we will bear all its joys and sorrows. We will be one of the two groups that God has mentioned in *Sūrat al-ʾAḥzāb*, "Of the believers are many men who have been true to the covenant which they made with God; some of them have fulfilled their obligation and some of them are still waiting, without having changed their resolve in the least."[366]

A huge gathering attended the centenary celebrations of the establishment of Dār al-ʿUlūm in Deoband. Shaykh Nadwī's speech there was considered the most fitting for the occasion in its spirit and message. He addressed the Indian Muslim people as a whole, while directing his message to the Hindu government:

> We openly proclaim, and we also want you [Muslims in India] to proclaim in your loudest voice, that we will never agree to live like animals only concerned about a monthly salary, personal survival and wealth. We refuse, a thousand times over, to live such a life or to accept such a vile status. We insist on remaining in this land with our *ṣalāh* and *ʾadhān*. In fact, we will never be prepared to sacrifice our *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh* and any optional *ṣalawāt* of the day or night. We will remain attached to every *sunnah* of our Prophet ﷺ and we will never leave out a single moment from his pure life. We do not recognise any nationalist movement; we recognise only the ʾIslāmic movement. We have been created for the guidance and leadership of humankind not any one race or nation.[367]

The Muslim Personal Law Board

The Indian Constitution affirms religious freedom for all communities and their right to the application of their personal law. The Muslims had enjoyed this right ever since Independence, until efforts were made by certain factions and the Hindu politicians in government took several steps that threatened religious freedom and the rights protected by the constitution. The *ʿulamāʾ* and ʾIslāmic thinkers established the Muslim Personal Law Board in 1972/1391 AH, representing all Muslim groups in the country, to ensure that the Shariʿah was duly recognised and implemented where appropriate. This was a rare display of unity among the Muslims. The movement was headed by Shaykh Qārī Muḥammad Ṭayyib Qāsimī who was then head of Dār al-ʿUlūm, Deoband, Shaykh Nadwī who was then head of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, Lucknow, and Shaykh Minnat ʾAllāh al-Raḥmānī who was the head of al-Jāmiʿah al-Raḥmāniyyah, Munger. They were supported by Shaykh Qāḍī Mujāhid al-ʾIslām Qāsimī the former president of the ʾIslāmic Fiqh Academy of India and Shaykh Sayyid Niẓām al-Dīn the ʾAmīr of Sharīʿah for the state of Bihar, Orissa and Jhārkand. The Muslim Personal Law Board elected Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan as its chairman. The Board provided an essential service for the community through

[366] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Muslimūn fī al-Hind*, pp. 245-46. Additionally, the ʾāyah quoted is from *Sūrat al-ʾAḥzāb*, 33: 23.
[367] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 401.

various committees concerned with issues related to strengthening the Sharīᶜah, and through the establishment of Sharīᶜah courts in different parts of India which looked into cases referred to them by Muslims on matters concerning ʾIslāmic injunctions. These committees and courts continue to serve their functions in these fields to this day.

The Board realised success under Shaykh Nadwī's wise guidance which united the Muslim population. They knew they could count on his intelligence and courage. He dealt with many of the problems which the Muslims faced in India. The Shah Banu case was probably the most heated. In settling this case, the Supreme Court issued an order giving a divorced Muslim woman the right to maintenance from her husband until she dies or marries someone else, according to Section 125 of the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure which does not discriminate as to the religious affiliation of the plaintiff. The Court claimed that this law is not in contradiction with the Qurʾānic law and offered an incorrect reading of the term *matāᶜ* (provision) in the Qurʾān. The Supreme Court went so far as to suggest an alteration to Muslim personal law on the basis of Clause 44 of the Indian Constitution which implies a uniform civil law for all citizens. The Indian government had stressed that each time the Muslims - under the leadership of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan - opposed an alteration to Muslim personal law, that it would remain unchanged so long as the Muslims themselves did not ask it to be changed. Some officials and other groups began urging certain individuals who had no commitment to ʾIslām to demand that change. However, Shaykh Nadwī and other Muslim community leaders were able to resist these conspiracies by organising massive public rallies and demonstrations. He met the Indian Prime Minister of the time, Rajiv Gandhi, and persuaded him to respect the relevant rulings within Muslim Personal Law. The Indian parliament passed an amendment to the Constitution which confirmed the Muslims' rights. Then, the Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Divorce Act 1986/1406 AH nullified the Supreme Court decision and made provisions for the maintenance of divorced women that were acceptable to Muslims. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, having observed these events, commented:

> *I watched the Shaykh for several years when the Indian government wanted to change the personal law of the Muslims and impose on them certain things which were not in conformity with the Sharīᶜah of ʾIslām, such as divorced women and other issues. The Shaykh stood as a solid rock against this alteration and roared like a lion in opposition to it. He said a loud and clear "No!" He conveyed this to the senior Hindu leaders in the country and rallied the Muslims behind him against this edict. He spoke in many Arab countries to gain the support of the ʾIslāmic forces against this edict. This small, mild, humble and tearful man exhibited himself as a swift-running horse and a sharp sword. At this point I remembered the stand adopted by ʾAbū Bakr ﷺ during the apostasy. He too was a soft-hearted man who cried profusely, and I remembered how he adopted that historical stand against the apostates and those who refused to pay zakāh, until God helped ʾIslām through him.*

The Shaykh was victorious in this battle, the government retreated from its position, and cancelled its edict, by the grace of God, and thereafter by the resoluteness, fortitude and refusal of the Shaykh.[368]

Educating the Muslims and uniting them

The main concern and preoccupation of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was always *daᶜwah*, conveying ʾIslām to the Muslims so that they should strive to live righteous, virtuous lives in accordance with the Qurʾān and Sunnah, performing what ʾIslām commands and refraining from what it prohibits. His efforts produced good results and many repented from un-ʾIslāmic customs and innovations that they had accepted through ignorance or through a desire to accommodate with non-Muslims. His personal conduct was notably persuasive and he used it, for example, by ensuring that the marriages ceremonies over which he presided were free of ignorant customs and wasteful, ostentatious expenditure. Clarifying and strengthening ʾIslām in the minds and hearts of the Muslims was also an important factor in bringing them to the basis upon which they could agree, unite and act from solidarity and strength.

The need for unity among the Muslims became increasingly evident during the frequent communal riots in the 1960s/1380s AH and thereafter, in which thousands of Muslims suffered. Shaykh Nadwī noticed that the ʾIslāmic groups active in providing emergency services were split into many parties, working without co-ordination and, most of the time, with an air of despondency. He wanted them to rediscover reliance on God and so find the self-confidence and fighting spirit by which they could defeat feelings of weakness, loss of hope and faint-heartedness in the face of their suffering. He initiated contacts with Muslim leaders from different political parties in order to form an association that would serve as an ʾIslāmic platform from which the voice of the Muslims could be raised in unity.

An initial meeting was held in Lucknow in August 1964 (Rabīᶜ al-ʾAwwal 1384 AH), which gave birth to the ʾIslāmic Consultative Assembly. The Assembly decided, as a first step, to tour the areas most prone to communal riots, to speak to the victims, and to make contact with educated non-Muslims and invite them to peaceful co-existence and co-operation. The tour went ahead with the participation of a group of non-Muslims. It greatly encouraged thinking educated non-Muslims to find the courage to speak up on behalf of the beleaguered Muslim minorities and to expose the activities of the fanatical communalist movements targeting them. Several journalists and writers wrote articles in newspapers defending the Muslims and asking for restrictions on the activities of the extremist Hindus.

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[368] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜAraftuh*, pp. 67-68.

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[368] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜArafṭuh*, pp. 67-68.

Co-existence: The Message to Humanity movement

Communal riots broke out in some cities of Bihar state during December 1963 and January 1964 (Rajab 1383 AH and Shaʿbān 1383 AH) and a large number of Muslims lost their lives. Emotions were heated, the atmosphere darkened, misunderstandings about ʾIslām and Muslims spread. At a gathering in Siwan, a city in Bihar, Shaykh Nadwī gave an inspiring speech. After he had finished speaking, an aged Hindu came up and said in English, "Wonderful! Wonderful!' He then said: 'I would like to say something. I have heard two speeches in my life with which I was greatly impressed. One was the speech of C. R. Das[369] and the other was Mawlānā's speech today. I am saying this openly: Muḥammad was true. And O Mawlānā! You are not for the Muslims alone. We have a right over you and we request you to visit this city again.' "[370]

From this experience the idea settled in Shaykh Nadwī's heart to invite more proactively to peaceful co-existence and for that purpose he formed the Message to Humanity movement in 1974/1393 AH. Its aim was to extinguish the fire of fanaticism and sectarianism in India, and create an atmosphere conducive to communal harmony and national peace. Senior ʾIslāmic and Hindu figures joined this movement and attended gatherings in different cities of India. It was a unique experience in the recent history of India. Shaykh Nadwī followed a new approach to presenting the teachings of ʾIslām, and the life of the Messenger ﷺ who was sent as a mercy to all creatures and to perfect the qualities of human character. In presenting ʾIslāmic history he highlighted Muslim efforts to embody ʾIslāmic teachings on equality, forbearance, justice between people, giving due respect to the rights of non-Muslims, to their values, their religions and religious institutions. He also emphasised the honoured status of human beings and their potential for nobility, for self-reform, for upright character, for showing compassion to the weak and needy, for co-operating in doing good, for striving to save people from falling into corruption and self-harm, and for spreading peace and harmony among neighbours and neighbourhoods. He would also mention that ʾIslāmic teachings urged the reprimanding of Muslims for deviation in their character and conduct, but always in the hope of helping them to reform and uniting them in the cause of the common good. This approach was welcomed by non-Muslims, who had been led to believe that ʾIslām was a religion of killing and bloodshed, intimidation and harshness, tyranny and compulsion. The number of non-Muslims who attended these gatherings increased steadily. Shaykh Nadwī's effort received wide approval and huge assemblies were held which made a positive impact. Educated Hindus were particularly receptive,

[369] Chitta Ranjan Das (1870-1925/1286-1343 AH), a lawyer and poet who became a nationalist leader in India.

[370] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 250.

including some judges and government officials. Some embraced ʾIslām after they were convinced by his call and the religion which he followed.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan became fully persuaded that dialogue, introducing ʾIslām through meetings and discussions, and treating people on the basis of human brotherhood, love and mercy, was the most relevant and effective for Muslims, especially in India. He was successful in making ʾIslām appeal to people and dissolving the hatred and enmity towards it that had settled in their hearts. He believed that sincere, inspiring speech can have an impact on hearts rarely achieved through other means, that contact through discourse and conversation produced better results. By contrast, addressing oppressive rulers and others antagonistic to ʾIslām in a harsh, combative manner will cause them to become even more oppressive and antagonistic. The best approach is therefore mild speech and wise words in emulation of God's instruction to Mūsā and Hārūn ﷺ, "But speak to him [the Pharaoh] in a mild manner, perhaps he may ponder or fear" (*Sūrah Ṭā Hā*, 20: 44); and his instruction to Muḥammad ﷺ, "Had you been harsh, hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you" (*Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān*, 3: 159). Shaykh Nadwī said about this approach:

> My intellectual and educational faculties, which hadn't yet stopped working [...] were not closed to the fearful conditions and situations, which always focused on past experiences, present realities and future dangers, guided me to a new direction and new experience in the field of nation-wide *daʿwah*. It entailed holding collective national gatherings in which particular attention was given to inviting non-Muslims, especially the educated among them. Speeches would be delivered in these gatherings while giving due consideration to the backgrounds and perspectives of those present, introducing them to ʾIslām, removing their reservations and misunderstandings, encouraging them to study ʾIslām and the life of the Messenger ﷺ with depth and an open mind, highlighting the dangers engulfing the country as a result of spiritual bankruptcy, moral depravation, and societal relationships overwhelmed by a materialistic view and greed for wealth.[371]

His contact with leaders

In addition to the efforts mentioned to comfort, calm and hearten the Muslims in India, and to rescue the country from brutal sectarianism and oppression, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan took every opportunity to meet with senior leaders and discuss matters with them to open channels for mutual understanding. He also wrote detailed letters explaining the issues of the Muslims, emphasising that the Muslims were a part of the Indian population and that if they were not understood and integrated, the progress and well-being of the whole Indian population would be negatively affected. He drew their attention to corruption

[371] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, pp. 337-38.

in the country, the communism, sectarianism and extremist nationalism, the excessive love for wealth, bribery, and the killing and plundering of property.

By way of example, I present a letter he wrote to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1976/1396 AH, when she imposed a state of emergency and harsh dictatorial measures to uproot opposition. Shaykh Nadwī's words are by no means rude, but still sharp and forthright. Despite this sharp rebuke of her policies, the Prime Minister's response was positive, she sent one of her representatives to his house in his village in order to confer with him and win his approval.

The situation has continued and worsened over the past six months since the harsh implementation of birth control measures. I fear that true reports are not reaching you. Rather, it is not imaginable that you would leave matters to regress from bad to worse. The true situation is that the state governments, contrary to the objectives of the central government, have taken to implementing this order and achieving success by adopting means that would ensure their power and authority, and in this they are competing against each other. Consequently, they treat their own citizens in the manner adopted by a foreign power, the administrative mentality of which is well-known. This has changed the country into a military barrack causing grief, intimidation and fear. Agents of the state governments are resorting to every type of despicable and barbaric act in order to achieve their worthless aims and objectives by means of this birth control policy. They are hunting down poor workers, villagers and craftsmen like animals and birds in the jungle. They are using brutal questioning, terror, inducements and banishment to achieve their objectives.

The natural outcome of these situations is moral depravity which causes fear and greed in a country that was already filled with barbarism. The most dangerous and most regrettable aspect is that the citizenry are on the verge of losing consciousness of that dignity and confidence in themselves founded by virtue of the efforts of the Movement of the National Conference, of the Khilāfah movement, and of our political leaders: Gandhi, Mawlānā ʾĀzād, Muḥammad ʿAlī and the Nehru family. The country feels as if it is still living a life of slavery and subjugation. Probably not a moment passes when a single person feels that this is a free, democratic country, distant from every form of force, compulsion and harshness, able to achieve its freedom and independence from a foreign government through its own struggles, and had now taken the reins of power in its hands.

I do not know anyone more desirous of establishing this confidence, more capable and more aware of its value and need than members of the Nehru family. This family has a fundamental share in these efforts. They irrigated this tree with their sweat and blood. How can it be acceptable to see this tree which is wilting and yellowing during the era of their rule, now having the need to reverse the conditions of the country? When any population goes back to slavery, cowardice and fear, and loses the qualities of bravery, aspiration, confidence, and noble acts, contrary to its likes and wants, under the pressure of fear and greed for wealth, and believes that protecting its life, position and authority is the most important thing, even if it were to lose its conscience, respectability and confidence, then there is no occasion for peace and rejoicing for such a nation, no matter how much outward political,

economic and educational progress it makes. A country stands out on the basis of its people, the people do not stand out on the basis of their country. The people live only through their wholesome internal qualities and ways, and their moral honour and courage; not by their means of livelihood and high standard of living.

It would mark the failure and defeat of the movement for freedom of the country, and for its leaders, if people are forced to be reminded of the era of subjugation and foreign rule. It would be a blemish if people today start thinking and wishing of the British era.[372]

Steering the Arab and ʾIslāmic worlds

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was always involved in the concerns of the whole *ʾummah*, Arab and non-Arab, in the east and the west, and expressed his concern in his speeches and books. If at times he was unable to mention some situations directly, he alluded to them so that people understood. He strove to engage the Muslims of the world with each other, to rescue them and replace self-centredness with mutual care and togetherness. His was a clear presence and voice in contemporary ʾIslāmic life. He never resorted to dubious wording or dissimulation in relation to a ruling of the Sharīʿah. His support for Muslim issues stood pre-eminent among the causes and concerns that busied his life.

This was so especially in the Arab world where he enjoyed a position not enjoyed by other non-Arabs of his time on account of his reputation for sincerity, devoutness, self-discipline and independence. He was a close observer of the issues and problems faced by the Arab peoples, and warned them of the trials and dangers that threatened them. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī writes, "The Arab world knew Shaykh Nadwī through his visits, meetings, lessons, lectures, books, writings, faith and character. Every educated Arab who loved his religion and was concerned about his community therefore loved and appreciated the Shaykh. He was most worthy of this love and appreciation. And what God has in store for him is far better and eternal *ʾin shāʾ ʾAllāh*."[373]

Shaykh Nadwī travelled through the ʾIslāmic and Arab worlds defending the fundamentals of ʾIslām, taking part in every conference, meeting or activity that could benefit ʾIslām and the Muslims. Among his most important books and articles, addressed to the Arabs and Muslims, on clear and explicit *daʿwah*, and authentic ʾIslāmic thought, are: *ʾIlā al-Rāyah al-Muḥammadiyyah ʾAyyuhā al-ʿArab*, *ʾIsmaʿūhā minnī Sarīḥatan ʾAyyuhā al-ʿArab*, *ʾAḥādīth Ṣarīḥah maʿ ʾIkhwāninā al-ʿArab wa al-Muslimīn*, *ʾIsmaʿī yā Sūrīyah*, *ʾIsmaʿī yā Zahrah al-Ṣaḥrāʾ*, *al-ʿArab wa al-ʾIslām*, *ʾIlā al-ʾIslām min Jadīd*, *al-Jāhilīyyah*

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[372] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Kārwāni Zindagi* (Lucknow: Maktabah Islami, 1998), vol. 2, pp. 218-21.

[373] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, p. 153.

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[373] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, p. 153.

Baᶜda al-ʾIslām, ʾAyyuhā al-ᶜArab, Kayfa Yastaᶜīd al-ᶜArab Makānatahum al-Lāʾiqah Bihim, Kayfa Dakhal al-ᶜArab al-Tārīkh, Nafaḥāt al-ʾĪmān Bayn Ṣanᶜā wa ʾUmmān, al-ʾInsāniyyah Tantaẓirukum ʾAyyuhā al-ᶜArab, al-Khaṭar al-ʾAkbar ᶜalā al-ᶜĀlam al-ᶜArabī and *ᶜĀṣifah Yuwājihuhā al-ᶜĀlam al-ʾIslāmī wa al-ᶜArabī.*

His love for the Arabs

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's love for the Arabs took strength in the knowledge that they were the people chosen as the bearers of God's message; it was from among them that the Seal of the Prophets was chosen, and it was in their language that God revealed His final Book. There is also another reason, namely that he was of Arab descent, from the family of Muḥammad ﷺ, and a branch of the Hāshimī, ᶜAlawī[374], Ḥasanī tree. Naturally he was pleased by this link, but he did not prioritise it among the motivations for his work:

> I am no less than the greatest Arab living in one of the Arab capitals in my Arab-ness, clear genealogy, love for the Arabs, and thorough acquaintance with their culture, sciences, literature and language. There is none from my pure Arab brothers who is more worthy of feeling proud for being Arab than me or one who has a greater share than me. However, ʾIslām is superior to every lineage and stronger than every tribal solidarity.[375]

That is why, for all his love of the Arabs, perhaps even because of it, he addresses them in forthright terms. For example, at the beginning of his book, *ʾIsmaᶜūhā Ṣarīḥatan minnī ʾAyyuhā al-ᶜArab*:

> If there was any nation on the surface of this earth which deserved my greatest appreciation, love and respect, it would undoubtedly be the Arabs […] If my soul were to propel me to flatter a nation and speak in glowing terms about them, it would be the great Arab nation.
>
> However, I consider such flattery on this occasion to be a moral crime, and I consider it to be a major treachery to this nation to which I am indebted in religion, character, humanity and honour; and to which the world and humanity are indebted in their new life, in their belief-system and in their morals. There is no nation which is more eligible for the fulfilment of a trust, more eligible for frankness, and more eligible for advice than this nation […]
>
> My faith and religion in which I believe and to which I am indebted imposes on me the obligation to be truthful and frank. My, religious, genealogical and cultural relationship with this nation, compels me to honesty, frankness, loyalty and trustworthiness. Then my conviction that the Arabs, being the chosen people for bearing the message of ʾIslām, are guaranteed stewardship of the world, provided

[374] Originally the word ᶜAlawī refered to a decent of ᶜAlī ibn ʾAbī Ṭālib ؓ. It was later used to refer to a sect of al-Shīᶜah. Here it refers to being a descendent of ᶜAlī ؓ.
[375] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-ᶜArab wa al-ʾIslām* (Lucknow: al-Majmaᶜ al-ʾIslāmī al-ᶜIlmī, 1980), p. 62.

> they adhere to this religion which Muḥammad ﷺ came with. It has taught me that this stewardship has not left them as yet, and no nation has appeared on the surface of the earth to replace this one and take over leadership.
>
> The thing that prompts me and urges me to say this is my love and ardent desire that the Arabs reclaim their international position and accept this blessed leadership, about the bearers of which God said, "We appointed from among them leaders, giving guidance under Our command, when they remained patient and believed with certainty in Our words" (*Sūrat al-Sajdah*, 32: 24); and that they turn away from the army about which God said, "We made them leaders calling towards the Fire. And they will not be helped on the day of Resurrection" (*Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28: 41). Rather, they should rebel against this, oppose it, go to battle against it, and proclaim in their loudest voice, "We are free from you and from whatever you worship apart from God. We reject you. Enmity and hatred have come to the open between us, to last until a time that you believe in God alone" (*Sūrat al-Mumtaḥinah*, 60: 4). This was the proclamation made by ʾIbrāhīm ؑ in his time, "It is this very statement which he left behind among his progeny so that they may always return to Him" (*Sūrat al-Zukhruf*, 43: 28).[376]

His criticism of Arab nationalism

There were many proponents of Arab nationalism in the 1950s/1370s AH, and many from the ʾIslāmic community followed and supported it through a wilful or unintended ignorance. But its proponents differed as to which qualities or components were at nationalism's core: some said that it is territory, ethnicity and the linguistic community of Arabic; others said, it is only the Arabic language that is the identifying factor, together with sharing common concerns and hopes; still others said differently. But, according to the chief proponents and exponents of Arab nationalism, religion was not one of its elements. Indeed, some explicitly stated that religion, ʾIslām or any other, had no part in it. Some people realised that the objective of this Arab nationalism was the separation of religion from the state, severing ʾIslāmic injunctions from society, replacing them with laws obtained from different legal systems, and giving free vent to racial tendencies and destructive schools of thought.

Shaykh Nadwī was one of the strongest opponents of this nationalistic tendency among the Arabs. He considered it a conspiracy against them, an ideology separate from ʾIslām. He stressed that it was ʾIslām alone which made the Arabic language eternal since its Book was revealed in Arabic and its noble Messenger ﷺ spoke Arabic. It was ʾIslām that took this language from the Arabian peninsula and spread it across the world. It was ʾIslām which rescued the Arabs from their ignorance, guided them from deviation, and moved them from the darkness of polytheism into the light of *tawḥīd* and ʾIslām. The great writer, ʾAnwar al-Jundī said, "Shaykh Nadwī did not attack

[376] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-60.

anything with such severity and force as he did the Arab tendency to restrictive nationalism and un-ʾIslāmic tribal solidarity, which manifested itself in that violent movement which wanted to strike a severe blow against ʾIslām through the Arabs, and to pit the Arabs against the Muslims [...] Shaykh Nadwī asks, 'Could the Arabs have played this great role, attracted the attention of the world and changed the course of history were it not for this divine message known as ʾIslām, this great book known as the Qurʾān, and were it not for their adoption of this new call and their *jihād* in its cause?' "[377]

The issue of Palestine

The Palestinian issue was the main issue that concerned and occupied Shaykh Nadwī once he learnt of the consequence of the international Jewish-Zionist policy for the expulsion of the Palestinian population and transfer of their land to the Jewish people and Zionist groups. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī reports Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's stance on the Palestinian issue:

The Palestinian issue is not an issue of the Palestinians alone nor of the Arabs alone. Rather it is an issue for all the Muslims. It is therefore essential to awaken the ʾIslāmic community to its danger, draw attention to the need to stand together to free it, and to adopt means and take due consideration of required norms for its return. This is not the first time Palestine was occupied by the enemies of ʾIslām and the Muslims. It was occupied for around 100 years during the Crusade wars. The Masjid al-ʾAqṣā was snatched away for ninety full years until God provided distinguished figures to this ʾIslāmic community who renewed the youth of the community with *ʾīmān*, revived the spirit of struggle and meaning of *jihād* in the cause of God. For example, Nūr al-Dīn and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, about whom Shaykh Nadwī spoke in glowing terms in his books and writings.

The freedom of Palestine can be achieved only in this way and in exactly this pattern, bringing the ʾIslāmic community to ʾIslām, renewing its spirit with *ʾīmān* and training its men for *jihād*. The Shaykh wrote articles and booklets on this subject, the most famous of which is, *al-Muslimūn wa Qaḍiyyah Filasṭīn*.

On the evening of 23rd July 1951 (18th Shawwāl 1370 AH), Shaykh Nadwī delivered a lecture in the auditorium of the Syrian University in Damascus. It was attended by the then head of the Syrian House of Representatives, Dr Maʿrūf al-Dawālībī, the rector of the University, Dr Qusṭunṭīn Zurayq, professors and students of the University, the *ʿulamāʾ* of Damascus, dignitaries and youth. The Shaykh drew attention to the causes of the Palestinian catastrophe and explained, "The greatest responsibility falls on the shoulders of the Arab leaders and rulers. It is they who did not fulfil the trust which their populations entrusted to them. Instead, they breached the trust, were embarrassed by the responsibility, played with the destinies of their peoples and disregarded their rights. In addition, their

[377] ʾAnwar al-Jundī, *ʾAʿlām al-Qarn al-Rabiʿ ʿAshr*, vol. 1, pp. 416-17, as cited in Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, pp. 108-09.

consciences did not prick them over their actions. Instead, they continued double-crossing, cheating and bargaining as if nothing was happening."[378]

Shaykh Nadwī did not therefore absolve the Arab and ʾIslāmic populations of their responsibility for this catastrophe, and all that came before, along with, and in its wake, the disregard, negligence, selfishness, irresponsibility, the paltry sacrificing of money, self and personal energy; the lagging behind, defeatism, the clinging to insignificant chattels, the destruction of honour and life, the unwillingness to prefer others over oneself. He attributed the Palestinian catastrophe to three factors: firstly, weakness in personal incentive and internal drive to sacrifice oneself for the sake of one's belief and principle; secondly, the transgression of reason over sentiment, being over-fearful of risks and avoiding dangers; and thirdly, the absence of a central figurehead with the power to reflect upon and ponder the issue, to make it his sole preoccupation and take full control of it.

The tenth session of the assembly of the representatives of the League for ʾIslāmic Literature was held in Amman between 20th-25th August 1998 (26th Rabīʿ al-Thānī - 2nd Jumādā al-ʾAwwal 1419 AH). The ʾAmīr, al-Ḥasan ibn Ṭalāl, learning of Shaykh Nadwī's presence in Amman, invited him to lunch at the royal palace. Also invited were a number of ʾumarāʾ and advisors, the Prime Minister with five colleagues from his ministry, eight rectors from different universities and heads of literary associations. Shaykh Nadwī had prepared a written speech on the Palestinian situation and the loss of al-Quds, which the League for ʾIslāmic Literature did not know about. In it he called on the ruler of Jordan to live up to his ʾIslāmic responsibility to recover al-Quds and Palestine.[379] He held that there was no way of doing so except through ʾIslām, only when the moral, psychological and intellectual factors behind defeat come to an end, and ʾIslām returns to its rightful place in the hearts, minds and manners of the Muslims, will the causes of all catastrophes end and Palestine return to the Arabs and Muslims. He said, "The issue of Palestine is an easy and simple one. The victory of the Arabs is guaranteed if they are free in their movements, have control over their rule, personally plan their politics, are prepared to risk their lives and armies, prepared to arbitrate with their swords and spears, have full confidence in the help of God, have full reliance on themselves, freed from subordination to material possessions and desires, and have a firm resolve to struggle and wage *jihād*."[380]

[378] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, p. 89.
[379] *Majallāt al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 16.
[380] ʾAnwar al-Jundī, *ʾAʿlām al-Qarn al-Rabiʿ ʿAshr* (vol. 1, p. 424), as cited in Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, p. 115.

Believing that the emancipation of Palestine required an extraordinary leader, Shaykh Nadwī urged the Arabs and Muslims to acquire the qualities of such a leader:

> The issue of saving Palestine is an issue of belief, an issue of morals, an issue of true resolve. If the resolve is correct and the hearts are true, the Jews will disperse just as lizards disperse. We are in need of a new training, an ʾIslāmic training; […] a new ideology. We are not in need of a new religion, God forbid, but we are in need of new *ʾīmān*. When conditions are not normal, man is in need of extraordinary *ʾīmān*, *ʾīmān* that is strong and deep, *ʾīmān* that is living and vibrant, and *ʾīmān*, if not like that of the Companions ﷺ then like that of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-ʾAyyūbī and of the many soldiers who fought under his flag. Al-Qāḍī Bahāʾ al-Dīn who is well-known as Ibn Shaddād said about his friend, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-ʾAyyūbī, "He turned away from all that was prohibited, abandoned all pleasures, and realised that God created him for a mighty purpose which does not comport with fun and games. He considered the issue of al-Quds to be a mighty purpose which cannot be borne by mountains. He was like a woman who had lost her child, who had been made bereft of her one and only child."[381]
>
> It is only then that new personalities will appear from your tattered garments and bodies. They would jump out and pounce on the world. This happened on numerous occasions in ʾIslāmic history. When the horizons become dark and the stars disappear, a new star appears on the horizon of the ʾIslāmic world. This is how it had been and this is how it will be *ʾin shāʾ ʾAllāh*.
>
> I had said yesterday, if there was a general question as to the person who is needed and required in the ʾIslāmic world today, the only answer would be Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-ʾAyyūbī. You should all therefore desire this lofty position. It is stated in a *ḥadīth* that the Messenger of God ﷺ said before the battle of Khaybar, "Tomorrow the flag will be taken by a person whom God and His Messenger love. Victory will be achieved at his hand." Senior Companions ﷺ harboured the hope that they would receive it, including ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ. The next day, the Messenger of God ﷺ called for ʿAlī and victory was achieved at his hands.[382] God says, "To each one We bestow, to these and to those, from the giving of your Lord. The giving of your Lord was never prevented by anyone" *(Sūrat al-ʾIsrāʾ/Banī ʾIsrāʾīl*, 17: 20).
>
> It is essential for us to bring ourselves to lead a life of self-discipline, bearing hardships, severity, steadfastness, pride in our *ʾīmān*, giving preference to the hereafter over this world, showing indifference to this worldly life and its attractions.
>
> I conclude my speech with two lines of al-Zarkalī, when he spoke for the ʾIslāmic community:
>
> Bring Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to us a second time, and renew the battle of Ḥiṭṭīn or one similar to Ḥiṭṭīn.[383]

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[381] ʾAbū al-Maḥāsin ibn Shaddād, a*l-Nawādir al-Sulṭāniyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 2000), p. 155. See also, pp. 213-16.
[382] Narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī, and in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim in the chapter, *Ghazwat Khaybar.*
[383] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Nafahāt al-ʾĪmān*, pp. 90-92.

The status of the Muslim community

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's most important argument for the Muslim community as a whole, its Arabs and non-Arabs, is that they are uniquely distinguished, and charged, among the peoples of the world, with the duty of conveying God's message, fulfilling His trust, and establishing His religion:

> I have made a comparative study of religions and divine books. I do not find this fine and comprehensive attribute, this line distinguishing between one nation and another, a nation that bears on its shoulders a responsibility which is unsurpassed, except by prophethood. The commissioning of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was attached, affixed and conjoined to the commissioning of a nation. This is what left a mark on the course of humanity. It was a new experience in the history of religions, in the history of the course of nations.[384]
>
> The commissioning of this nation which was unique in its faith, unique in its simplicity and modernity, unique in its connection with the human family and with the pain which it felt at the condition of humanity in every part of the world. This was a new experience. This collective commissioning encompassed all the Arabs who then became guides, bearers of a message, bearers of a light. Which then produced this turn in history.[385]
>
> The nations were in need of such a unique nation, a nation that could lead humanity, a nation that differed from other nations in its firm and solid belief-system, in the spirit of sacrifice, in simplicity of life, in considering itself above vain desires and personal motives, a nation that is not enticed by anything which entices other nations despite its leadership, and despite its advancement in cultures, philosophies and sciences.[386]
>
> The ʾIslāmic world can never rise without the message entrusted by its founder Prophet Muḥmmad ﷺ, having faith in it and sacrificing oneself for it. It is a powerful, clear, brilliant message. The world has never come across a message more just, more superior and more beneficial to humanity.
>
> It is the same message which the Muslims carried during their first conquests. One of their messengers summarised it in the assembly of the Persian king, Yazdajird, "It is God who sent us to remove whoever wishes to go from the servitude of servants to the servitude of God alone, from the constriction of this world to its wide expanse, and from the injustices of religions to the justice of ʾIslām." It is a message which neither needs the changing of any word nor the addition of a letter. It is totally applicable to the twentieth century as it was applicable to the seventh century. It is as though time has circuited to the day when the Muslims left their peninsula in order to rescue the world from the clutches of paganism and ignorance.

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[384] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾIslām wa al-Ḥaḍārah al-ʾInsāniyyah* (Kuwait: Dār al-Qalam, 1994), p. 20.
[385] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[386] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

People today are still devoted to their idols, whether they are hewed out, carved out, buried or erected, the worship of God alone is still in the minority. Temptations still lurk around all and sundry. The god of desires is still worshipped. The rabbis, bishops, kings, rulers, people of power and wealth, leaders, and political parties are still gods to the exclusion of the true God. Offerings are placed before them and the forehead falls in prostration to them.

Similar is the case with the world today despite its expansion, the accessibility of means of transport and the ease of moving from one place to another and the making of contact between peoples and nations. It is far more populated than what it was yesterday. Materialism, which looks at nothing but its own feet, has constricted this world. It believes in nothing but the benefit of the materialist. It knows nothing but devotion to vain desires and worship of the ego. Selfishness, which does not permit two people to live in a wide tract of land, narrow nationalism which looks askance at every foreigner, refuses to him every favour and deprives him of every right. All of these have suffocated man.

Then the tyrannical politicians tightened their hold over this materialistic life. It is they who have a monopoly of the means of life, sustenance and food. They place restrictions in this life on whomsoever they wish, and remove restrictions from whomsoever they please. They provide sustenance in abundance, according to their claims, to whomsoever they choose, and place restrictions in this regard on whomsoever they wish. Huge cities have therefore become narrower than a lizard's hole. And the people there have become restricted like a simpleton or orphan.[387] The land has become constricted to the people despite its wide expanse, and their own lives have revolved around themselves. People are in chains and fetters in the city and kingdom, both of which continuously threaten them with fabricated and genuine hunger, internal and external wars, and weekly or daily interruptions of labour.

Yes, from the injustices of religions to the justice of ʾIslām. Even in this enlightened, protected, and cultured age, we find religions playing around with the minds of people, subjugating them like donkeys and cattle, justifying to their followers the killing of hundreds of humans because of a single cow that was slaughtered on the occasion of ʿĪd al-ʾAḍḥā, or because of a *holy* tree that was chopped down in a village.[388]

The Arabs and the leadership of humanity

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, as we saw previously, often reminded the Arabs of their responsibility, through the mission of ʾIslām, to lead humanity. He says in the introduction to *al-ʿArab wa al-ʾIslām*:

God chose the Arabs for ʾIslām because of natural traits and intrinsic qualities which they alone possess. God first said about the Banū ʾIsrāʾīl, "We chose them

[387] The reference is to legal competence in ʾIslāmic law, which is denied to orphans until they become of age and for simpletons. For them decisions that have legal consequences must be taken by their legally recognised guardian.

[388] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn* (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-ʿĀlam li al-Kitāb al-ʾIslāmī, 4th edn. n.d.), pp. 267-68.

knowingly over the peoples of the world" (*Sūrat al-Dukhān*, 44: 32). He then said about the Arab Prophet ﷺ, "God knows well the place to which He sends His message" (*Sūrat al-ʾAnʿām*, 6: 124).

Many researchers investigated these traits and authors wrote on this subject. The first Arabs proved the wisdom behind this choice by virtue of their deep understanding of the nature of ʾIslām, their total absorption of its teachings, their rare abstention from all that would contradict it, their unparalleled zeal for spreading ʾIslām, their unique spirit of sacrifice to raise the word of ʾIslām, and their scrupulous trustworthiness in safeguarding its ideology and culture. The ʾIslāmic leadership was, as said by the Arab poet, ʾAbū al-ʿAtāhiyah, about the Khalīf al-Mahdī:

> The *Khilāfah* came in submission to him, dragging its coat-tails. The *Khilāfah* was made solely for him, and he was made solely for it.

God joined the Arabs to ʾIslām forever and joined the destiny of one to the other. The Arabs can enjoy no honour except through ʾIslām. And ʾIslām will not be portrayed with its correct manifestation unless its vehicle is driven by the Arabs and they carry its lantern. The Messenger of God ﷺ was most desirous of the continuity of this strong sacred bond between the Arabs and ʾIslām. He thus made the Arabian peninsula the eternal centre of ʾIslām and its everlasting capital. He was most desirous of the safety of this centre, its tranquillity, and its intense adherence to ʾIslām.[389]

The Arabs and ʾIslām remained two comrades, each one devoted to the other, and each vowing not to separate from the other. They were, as said by the Arab poet, al-ʾAʿshā ibn Maymūn al-ʾAsdī:

> We are two who were given to drink from the breast of the same mother. We are only differentiated by a mole. We will never ever separate from each other.

The Arabs lived and were honoured through ʾIslām. They ruled the world and their language and culture spread to lands, regions and environments as never before. Without ʾIslām and the Qurʾān, their language would not have become firmly established. The scholars and intelligentsia adopted it as a language of religion, knowledge and writing. They would never have done this had it not been the official language of ʾIslām and the key to the ʾIslāmic library. Their love for the Arabs and deep understanding of religion urged many of the *ʿulamāʾ* and *ʾAʾimmah* of non-Arab lands who were born and brought up in these lands to adopt many Arab customs and distinguishing marks, to uphold the Arabic language and its literature, to be interconnected with it, to make it a continuous speech among their offspring, and to warn against emulating non-Arabs and adopting their characteristics. All this was solely due to their deep and firm love for the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ, because he came to the Arabs, and because God was pleased with their character, manners and inclinations which trace back to ʾIbrāhīm ﷺ.

The advice of one of the senior *ʾAʾimmah* of ʾIslām in a non-Arab land provides a clear proof of this. Shaykh al-ʾIslām Shāh Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī writes in one of his articles entitled, *al-Maqālah al-Waḍiyyah fī al-Naṣīḥah wa al-Waṣiyyah*:

[389] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-ʿArab wa al-Islam*, pp. 3-4.

"We are strangers whose forefathers emigrated to India. Our Arabic lineage and Arabic tongue are two points of pride for us. It is this Arabic which brings us close to the leader of the past and future generations, the leader of the Prophets and Messengers ﷺ, and the pride of existence, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Showing gratitude for the greatest of bounties entails that, as far as possible, we do not abandon the habits and customs of the first Arabs among whom the Messenger of God ﷺ grew up, and that we never permit the ways of the non-Arabs and the Hindus to spread among us."

He then says:

"The fortunate one among us is the one who acquired a share in the Arabic language, etymology, grammar, and literature; and then acquired knowledge of the *ḥadīth* and Qurʾān. It is essential for us to always be conscious of the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn and to attach our hearts to these two places. This is the secret to our success. The unfortunate and wretched one is the one who disregards them."[390]

Shaykh Nadwī emphasised that only the Arabs can fill the spiritual and moral vacuum that has pervaded the world:

Only the Arab ʾIslāmic community [...] can still convey the ʾIslāmic message in this century if only it recognises its value, the sources of its strength, the magnitude of its message and the weightiness of its responsibility. When is the Arab ʾIslāmic community going to wake up and carry the message once again, and the only light, the light of ʾIslām? It is the light which is still with the Arabs in the pages of the Qurʾān and the pages of the life of the Prophet ﷺ. We, the children of the Indian continent, look to this peninsula as a guiding nation and a bearer of this message.[391]

The role of ʾIslāmic organisations

For the well-being of the *ʾummah*, it is self-evident that the organisations dedicated to that end should be fit to serve. Shaykh Nadwī offered advice and counsel whenever he was concerned about the quality of that service. He wrote to Shaykh Muḥammad Surūr al-Ṣabbān, the General Secretary of the Muslim World League, about his dissatisfaction with the disorderliness that seemed to characterise the work of ʾIslāmic organisations, along with some positive suggestions. Shaykh al-Ṣabbān replied to his letter on 4th August 1967 (27th Rabīᶜ al-Thānī 1387 AH):

I received your letter dated 24/4/87 AH in which you expressed your sadness concerning the events that the Muslims are facing at present. You also provided several positive suggestions in the light of the recent events in the region. I agree with you that a life which is not established on firm *ʾīmān*, strong religion and upright character will soon crumble and disintegrate to the extent that it will not be able to bear the slightest calamity. There is no doubt whatsoever that our League was established for deep-rooted scholarly and practical reform. It is a goal that cannot be

390 *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.
391 ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *al-ʾIslām wa al-Ḥaḍārah al-ʾIslāmiyyah*, p. 27.

achieved on sound principles unless the modus operandi is derived from the Qurʾān and Sunnah. As for the events which we face today, particularly the Palestinian issue, I stress to you that it is first and foremost a religious issue. I therefore believe that you will agree with me that the essence of the events and the nature of the issue both demand a correct general understanding of the problem so that the issue is presented in a scholarly manner from an ʾIslāmic perspective. This would result in a positive and firm response. I am pleased to stress to you that we are giving full attention to the contents of your letter, and we appreciate and value your advice. We will present it to the Founding Assembly during its annual session *ʾin shāʾ ʾAllāh*.[392]

The development of academic institutes in the Arab world

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan felt that the first, most important and most pressing responsibility of academic institutes and universities in any ʾIslāmic country was to strengthen the faith of the ʾIslāmic community in its beliefs and ideas, in the civilisation it embraces, the call and message which it has adopted, and the particular qualities and characteristics that go with those responsibilities. The goal to strive for is to establish *ʾīmān* in the *ᶜālim* and a cultured or scholarly person whose heart and intellect are equally convinced of the trust. Shaykh Nadwī was a member of the Consultative Assembly of the ʾIslāmic University in Madīnah. He wrote to its head at the time, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz ibn ᶜAbd ʾAllāh ibn Bāz, with his observations and suggestions based on practical experience, aimed at improving the educational system and the level of education at that university. Shaykh Ibn Bāz appreciated his suggestions and wrote to him:

I thank you greatly for your involvement with the university and your intense desire to do all that would raise its profile and ease the way to reach its goals. May God reward you well. Your attendance in Madīnah after the *ḥajj* and participation in the Consultative Assembly made a positive impact and helped to make many improvements. May God reward you.

[...] As for the suggestions and words of advice contained in your letter, your brother receives them with gratitude and appreciation, and supplicates for additional inspiration, rectitude and activity for the sake of the truth. I presented these to the assembly of the university. The members are grateful and really appreciate the suggestions and words of advice which you offered, them. It was essentially agreed to accept your suggestion that the examinations should be on the entire syllabus and not only on what was read, for reasons that you pointed out. This will be borne in mind in the future and particular attention will be given to the prescribed books *ʾin shāʾ ʾAllāh*. There will be a specified time limit for this so that it is easy to arrange what you said. We ask God to reward you and to inspire the administrators of the university to do all that is good.

As for the other suggestions, they are under study and review, and will be applied once their advantages become clear. Some of these may be delayed until

392 ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAᶜlām*, pp. 100-01.

the Consultative Assembly holds its next session. You made reference to certain matters which take place within the university, which have to be signposted and have to be brought to an end [...] You are certainly aware that the cosmopolitan nature of the university means it cannot be compared to others, given the many different types and races of students, and differences in their languages, knowledge and backgrounds. For a university like this to be safe from matters which may be distasteful is difficult. However, all praise is due to God that the students are desirous of knowledge and instruction. They respond to the teachers and advisors, they adhere to the ʾIslāmic manners which they hear, are desirous of understanding the proofs of the Sharīʿah, according preference to the preferred opinion, and regarding as spurious what is proven to be spurious. You are fully aware that it is the duty of the teachers in such an environment to infuse the ʾIslāmic spirit within its individuals, remind them of the lives of the pious predecessors, create respect for the Qurʾān and Sunnah in their hearts, encourage them to give due consideration to the proofs of the Sharīʿah, to adhere to these proofs, to warn against blind *taqlīd*, which casts the majority of people into polytheism, innovations and fabrications.[393]

Advising the Arabs to prepare for leadership

Since Shaykh Nadwī felt that the Arabs were uniquely qualified, through their service of the Qurʾān and Sunnah to lead humanity, he encouraged them to acquire the appropriate qualities for that responsibility and to rid themselves of those that lead to the fall of nations and peoples. Most important of all was to lead a life of self-discipline:

You Arabs are my brothers, are living in a certain part of the earth in which everyone is looking for reasons I presently cannot explain. This is known to people of insight and deep study. You are living in a region towards which the enemies are directing all their energies, their intelligence and their plots, so as to distance it from these things; its message, its ʾIslāmic Arab personality, and its leadership of the ʾIslāmic world. This is one of the most dangerous conspiracies ever known in history. The nations notwithstanding their differences; may even be antagonistic towards each other or have one point of unity, namely putting an end to the position of the Arabian peninsula and severing its ties with ʾIslām. I am saying this as a scout who does not lie to his people, as one who has visited Europe and America, studied the books of the Orientalists, and closely follows whatever is said, written and published there. I now say in the light of my knowledge and experiences, it is not the outside world and distant nations and governments that pose a threat to the intrinsic nature and identity of this Arabian peninsula. Rather, you are surrounded by appeals and attractions that are in conflict with ʾIslām. You are surrounded by armies which stand on philosophies which are against ʾIslām, against the things that establish your identity, the essence of your message and your pivotal role in the world. It should therefore never be tolerable for you to incline to comfort and living a life of luxury and pomp. I openly say to you: opulence is the biggest factor in the destruction of governments, the breaking down of civilisations and the fall of societies. This is

[393] *Ibid.*, pp. 55-57.

what the Qurʾān spoke against, "When We decide to destroy a town, We order its people who indulge in the pleasures of life. They then transgress therein and the word is thus justified against it. We then destroy it with utter destruction" (*Sūrat al-ʾIsrāʾ/Banī Isrāʾīl*, 17: 16). The word *al-Mutrafūn* (people who indulge in the pleasures of life) is a word repeated several times in the Qurʾān. God says, "How many a town We destroyed that exulted in its means of livelihood! Now these are their houses, they have never been dwelt in after them, except for a few. Eventually, it is We who inherit everything" (*Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28: 58).

Opulence and exultation are one of the strongest civilisational, psychological and moral factors which caused the fall of old, long-lived governments and flourishing civilisations to regress. It is therefore necessary for you to return to a life of simplicity and abstinence. I am not saying that you must live like the past Bedouins, eating the meat of camels and drinking their milk, and not enjoy any of the bounties that God has bestowed. No. I am not calling you towards renunciation of the world. There is no such concept in ʾIslām. I am not calling you to unnatural abstinence. Rather, to some abstinence and some simplicity.[394]

The following is a comprehensive and unique counsel, written in Makkah, which Shaykh Nadwī addressed to the Arabs:

If all the Arabs were assembled before me on a single plain and I was able to address them in such a way that their ears could hear my words and their hearts could remember them, I would say to them. "Respected elders! The ʾIslām which our leader, Muḥammad ﷺ the Arab, brought is the source of your life and the break of your true dawn. The Prophet ﷺ is the source of your honour, the cause of your commemoration, and everything which came to you. in fact, every good which came to the world. was through him and at his hands. God refuses to honour you except through your allegiance to him, your holding on to him, adopting his message for yourselves and sacrificing yourselves for his religion. There is none to repulse the decree of God and none to alter the words of God. The Arab world is an ocean without water until it adopts our master, Muḥammad ﷺ as its leader and guide for its life and efforts, and it rises with the message of ʾIslām as it did in the first era. Furthermore, it must rescue the oppressed world from the claws of the lunatics of Europe, who are bent on burying civilisation and putting an absolute end to humanity with their selfishness, arrogance and ignorance, and divert the world from regress to progress, from destruction, annihilation, rebellion and agitation to constructive change, organisation, peace and harmony, from unbelief and transgression to belief and obedience. This is a responsibility on the shoulders of the Arab world. It will be answerable to its Lord about it. It should therefore ponder the detail of its reply."

His handling of contemporary ʾIslāmic groups

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan never took active part in politics to seek to gain or directly influence the exercise of power. However, he was fully aware of and concerned by the political situation of the Muslims in India and in the

[394] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Nafaḥāt al-ʾĪmān*, pp. 36-38.

Arab and ʾIslāmic world, and felt a responsibility towards them. His position, as set out in his book, *al-Tafsīr al-Siyāsī li al-ʾIslām fī Mirʾāt Kitābāt Mawdūdī wa Sayyid Quṭb*, was to show that the objective of establishing ʾIslāmic rule was guidance, not taxation, all aspirants to power should make *daʿwah* the object of their efforts and activities.[395]

The largest national movement in India witnessed at the beginning of the twentieth century was the Khilāfah movement, led by Mawlānā Muḥammad ʿAlī Jawhar. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was only a child when this movement was at its peak of popularity, but he was nonetheless aware of it:

> I was not even ten years old when the disastrous event, the dissolution of the Ottoman *Khilāfah* took place. I therefore did not grasp the gravity of the situation, the horror of it, and its far-reaching consequences. But when I remember the Khliāfah movement, the conversations about its strength and zeal, and the anxiety and sorrow of self-respecting and ardent Muslims. They seem to be conversations that took place just yesterday. My pen did not desist from expressing these sentiments and realities, understanding an investigation of which at the time was beyond my age and grasp.[396]

He witnessed the independence and partitioning of India. He was among those opposed to the partition because it was bound to disadvantage the Muslims, who would lose political weight and religious impact. The view of the majority of the *ʿulamāʾ* of India was that partition would harm *daʿwah* and efforts to preserve the ʾIslāmic ethos of the Muslims.[397] The problems that the Muslims of India, Kashmir, Pakistan and Bangladesh have long been experiencing as a result of partition are plain to see.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan also witnessed the great tragedy of the destruction of Palestine in 1948/1367 AH by the establishment of Zionism in the heart of the Arab world, followed by its further expansion after the war of June 1967/1386 AH. These two events touched him deeply and he applied himself to understand the real reasons behind this tragedy and expressed his intense sorrow over it. Though he did not enter the conventional political arena, he was always politically concerned:

> Those who tell the people that politics is not only a forbidden tree but a cursed tree in the Qurʾān, who advise the community to remain aloof from it, both academically and practically, and occupy themselves with the establishment of welfare foundations or merely improve the people's economic standing; those who are issuing such directives are actually urging the community towards social and national suicide. In such a situation, the Muslims will not be able to maintain their identity, their religious responsibilities, and their ʾIslāmic laws. They will not be able to protect their beliefs and civilisation. Let alone being in a position to take on the responsibility of leadership and

[395] See Turkī al-Salmān, *al-Fikr wa al-Sulūk al-Siyāsī ʿInda ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.).
[396] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, pp. 67-68.
[397] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 202.

daʿwah, which is their essential role and fundamental duty, they will not be able to live with honour and dignity in their country. The particular academic and intellectual climate in which I grew up, and which was never cut off from the realities of life and the affairs of the community for even a single day, cannot allow me to adopt this way of thinking and follow such an apologetic line. I can never close my eyes from the gravity of the affairs of the Muslims and the need to make effort in this regard.[398]

As I noted earlier, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan made it a point not to engage in destructive criticism of others on matters of doctrine or law, even if he disagreed with their positions or policies. This was a part of his abstinence and self-discipline, his *ṣabr*, and his way of defending against assertive self-righteousness. The same holds true of his handling of the differences between contemporary ʾIslāmic groups and movements. He abhorred whatever might lead to division, sectarianism and weakening of the spirit of solidarity and co-operation. He did what he could through informal counselling and through setting a good example. This can be illustrated from my own experience. While at Oxford I wrote a book comparing the ideology of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan and Mawlānā Mawdūdī. When the Shaykh visited Oxford I presented to him an abridged version of this book in Urdu. He read it and approved its argument but, he said, "It should not be published because the present situation in India does not permit causing any split among the Muslims."

When it was necessary to speak out against something, he did so with civility, moderation, wisdom, and with an eye on the interests of the Muslims as a whole. His criticisms of the Tablīghī Jamāʿah, and his criticisms against Mawlānā Mawdūdī and Sayyid Quṭb are well-known. These were scholarly criticisms that did not target anyone personally, nor did he speak to undermine the efforts and achievements of the Tablīghī Jamāʿah or of Mawlānā Mawdūdī or Sayyid Quṭb.

Guiding contemporary ʾIslāmic movements

The awakening of the Muslim identity gathered pace during the lifetime of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. It was a world-wide movement, albeit dispersed, not centralised and not co-ordinated, to which his own life's work contributed enormously. The movement was, we may say, at the stage of labour pains, yet to give birth. When or how that birth may be is by the grace of God, "And on that day, the believers shall rejoice, by the help of God, He helps whomsoever He wills, He alone is mighty, merciful" (*Sūrat al-Rūm*, 30: 4-5).

The greatest fears for the awakening are; needless excesses and severity, holding on to outward matters and abandoning core issues, excessive preoccupation with secondary and controversial issues, having bad opinions about Muslims to the extent of labelling them sinners, deviants, and even unbelievers. The Shaykh, by nature was

[398] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 335.

balanced in his thinking and conduct throughout his entire life. He was thus ancient and modern, traditional and contemporary, a person of the righteous past and a Ṣūfī, firm and progressive, as soft as silk and as firm as steel. And this is what he wanted the awakening to be. Shaykh Nadwī did not restrict himself to adhering to any specific group or movement. He remained free, supervising groups from the outside. He was thus able to see faults and defects which the members of these groups could not see. He would see their points of weakness and direct them, advise them, criticise them and set them aright in the hope they would continue in goodness.

In a like manner, the Shaykh did not spare any efforts in advising Muslim rulers and leaders whenever he found an opportunity to do so. He was most able for this as he did not hanker for anything from any one of them.[399]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan had high hopes for the ʾIslāmic awakening. He gathered his advice and guidance for those working for it in a collection called *Tarshīd al-Ṣaḥwah al-ʾIslāmiyyah*. The main points of this text are:

1. The awakening must be in accordance with the ʾIslāmic belief-system as expressed in the Qurʾān and Sunnah. It must be in accordance with the practice of the Messenger ﷺ; it must emulate him and *al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn* after him; it must emulate the understanding of the learned scholars and the beliefs of the general Muslims. It must not be driven towards political tendencies and fleeting trends.
2. This awakening must be characterised by expansiveness and in-depth knowledge and understanding of both the Qurʾān and Sunnah and be accompanied by social awareness and understanding of contemporary issues. It must understand current movements and trends, as well as their relationship to ʾIslām, their impact on life and the dangers which they pose to the future of this religion and the ʾIslāmic people. It must have knowledge of the motives of the different leaderships that seek control over these peoples and their environments.
3. This movement must not be negative, that is, hasty in confronting established governments and powers that dispose the means of coercion and force. If it does this, it will cause problems by wasting its energies and time, create enemies for itself and wage *jihād* in a *non-jihād* arena and against a non-enemy.
4. The leaders of the ʾIslāmic awakening must be characterised by a measure of distance from official positions of authority and power, and from a life of luxury and indulgence. They must not compete against those who hold positions of authority and power. Instead, their lives and character must be marked by abstinence, contentment and reliance on God.
5. Nevertheless, this awakening must be associated with the spirit of sacrifice, courage, thoroughness, abstinence, and the ability to calculate and take necessary risks, while relying on God.

[399] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, p. 92.

His attitude towards the Tablīghī Jamāʿah

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's meeting with Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIlyās was a major turning point in his life. It was then that he came to the realisation that working within the circles of the learned did not suffice, there had to be contact with all classes of Muslim society. It was after that meeting that he began to carry his *daʿwah* into the villages and cities across India and beyond. However, after the death of Shaykh Muḥammad ʾIlyās, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan perceived that the Jamāʿah had not moved on from where it began and was not developing its *daʿwah* effectively to meet the needs of Muslims. It concentrated on correcting beliefs and ritual practices, and did not consider wider, cultural elements of how Muslims express their ʾIslām in their lives as a whole:

This is very gratifying work although it ought to have some openness and familiarity with the psychology of the modern educated youth, consideration of their understanding and values, and consideration of their ways of thinking. The extent of their work is limited to correcting beliefs and acting on the compulsory aspects of ʾIslām. As for cultivating the minds, preparing the youth, and the new generation to make an impact on the educated class and on the leaders, this is overlooked by them.[400]

Shaykh Nadwī called the attention of the elders of the Tablīghī Jamāʿah to the need to adapt and extend their *daʿwah* to meet the needs of the people. Although he did not get any response, he continued supporting them and did not express dissent against them.

His attitude towards al-ʾIkhwān al-Muslimīn

ʾImām Shahīd Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ was probably the closest to Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan in temperament and manner. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was unable to meet him but got to know him through the results of his efforts in Egypt and the Arab world. He would praise him profusely and did so with heartfelt intensity in his introduction to *Mudhakkirāt al-Daʿwah wa al-Dāʿiyah* by ʾImām Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ:

This is a person whom divine providence prepared and divine cultivation produced, and brought into the open at the right time and place. […] He is not a man who was prepared by others, made by an environment or school, the product of history or custom, the product of an effort or endeavour, nor the product of an experiment or practice. He is one of the products of divine inspiration and wisdom, bearing special consideration for this religion and this nation of ʾIslām. It is a noble tree which was prepared for a magnificent purpose and great deed at a time when there was a severe need, and in an environment where the value of such a person is very high.

[400] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Naṣāʾiḥ wa Tawjīhāt li al-Shabāb al-Muslim* (Lucknow: Nadwat al-ʿUlamaʾ, n.d.), p. 54.

Everyone who knew ʾImām al-Bannāʾ did so by being close to him and not from books. Everyone lived attached to him. Everyone recognised the excellence of this person who sprang into existence, and suddenly came upon Egypt and then the entire Arab and ʾIslāmic world with his *daʿwah*, *tarbiyah*, *jihād* and vibrant strength, in whom God combined many talents and abilities. It may seem impossible in the eyes of many psychologists, historians and assessors, but that is because his was an extraordinary, eminent and enlightened intellect, with expansive understanding, strong and vibrant affection, a blessed flowing heart, a young lush spirit, a sharp and eloquent tongue, abstention and contentment, feeling no strain in his personal life. His was an intense desire and high courage without any fatigue in the cause of spreading his message and principles, a spirit with high aspirations, towering courage, a penetrating and far sight, pride and respect for *daʿwah*, humility in all things related to the soul [...] and a humility which is unanimously attested to by those who knew him.

All these attributes and talents helped to form a religious and social leader. The Arab world and beyond did not know a stronger religious and political leader who made a deeper impact, and who produced more results; and in forming an ʾIslāmic movement which was rarely found specifically in the Arab world which had a broader base, which was more vibrant, which was more influential, which had penetrated more of the society, and which enchanted the souls more than this movement.

The ingenuity of ʾImām al-Bannāʾ as a *dāʿī*, despite the many aspects and facets of his genius, was manifest in two specific aspects. Very few *duʿāt*, trainers, leaders and reformers share these two aspects with him.

Firstly, his dedication to *daʿwah*, his faith and conviction in it, his sacrificing himself for it, and his total attention to it with all his talents, strength and means. This is the fundamental prerequisite and foremost characteristic for *duʿāt* and leaders at whose hands God brings about abundant good.

Secondly, he had a deep impact on the hearts of his companions and students, and had astonishing success in tutoring them and producing real results. He was the originator of a generation, a tutor of a nation, and a founder of an academic and moral school. He was able to incline teachers and workers who came into contact with him, and made such an impact on their tastes, perspectives, modes of expression, language, and speeches, that has endured despite the passage of time and occurrence of various events. It still remains a main feature and mark by which they are recognised in all times and climes.

I missed the opportunity of meeting him in Egypt and outside of Egypt. He was then martyred, causing millions of Muslims to grieve over him. The ʾIslāmic world was deprived of this unique historical personality. I still regret this loss which was decreed for me.[401]

Despite this testimony of his, Shaykh Nadwī felt that the Brotherhood needed some direction with regard to the constricting situation which it found itself in. He therefore wrote the article, *I wish to address the ʾIkhwān*, in which he said:

The task of *daʿwah* and the message of ʾIslāmic revival is not based on changing the system or changing the political condition for another system or condition. Nor is

[401] ʾImām Ḥasan al-Bannāʾ, *Mudhakkirāt al-Daʿwah wa al-Dāʿiyah*, pp. 3-8.

it based on disseminating culture and knowledge, fighting against the forces of falsehood, or treating certain social problems as alleged by some reformers in the West. Rather, it is the *daʿwah* of ʾIslām which brought about a deep-rooted revolution not only in society, but in the mind, heart, spirit and body of the Muslim individual. This was the *daʿwah* of the Prophets ﷺ who did not bother with gaining the seat of power. This came to them from God as a means to establish religion. In this way, the *daʿwah* came through the government, but this was a result and not the objective. There is a big difference between the objective for which one strives and the result which manifests itself. This difference manifests itself in the psychology of the worker. If his objective is gaining the seat of power, he will sit back and give up if he does not acquire it, or he will give up hope. And if he acquires it, he will forget about his *daʿwah* and become preoccupied with governance.

Any group which makes governance its goal is in danger of deviating from the path of *daʿwah*. This is because the way to reach the seat of authority does not coincide with the ways of *daʿwah*. If the matter of establishing religion is dependent on governance, we will work towards it on condition that the fundamentals of *daʿwah* are deeply embedded in the hearts of the *duʿāt*.[402]

His attitude towards the Jamāʿat ʾIslāmī

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan acknowledged the impact of Mawlānā Mawdūdī on the contemporary Muslim generation. He said, "I do not know anyone who had such an ideological and intellectual impact on the new ʾIslāmic generation as did Mawlānā Mawdūdī. His *daʿwah* was established on an intellectual foundation which was deeper and stronger than any other foundation upon which political *daʿwah* could be established. His books and writings were directed towards understanding the nature of the Western civilisation and its philosophy of life and analysing it in an intellectual manner rarely found in the near past. He presented ʾIslām, its systems of life, its civilisation and rule, its appropriateness in society and life, its leadership of humanity and the human cause in a thorough intellectual style, utlising contemporary language which appealed to the psychology of the educated class."[403]

When Mawlānā Mawdūdī formed the Jamāʿat ʾIslāmī in 1940/1358 AH, his fundamental objective was to establish an ʾIslāmic state. Shaykh Nadwī joined him for some time and was his representative in Lucknow. Shaykh Nadwī then withdrew himself when he saw in the writings of Mawlānā Mawdūdī an interpretation of ʾIslām that was far from the course of the pious predecessors and alien to his own religious spirit. Shaykh Nadwī also criticised some of his methods in his book, *al-Tafsīr al-Siyāsī li al-ʾIslām* (A Political Interpretation of ʾIslām). Shaykh Nadwī explains with sincerity the points in the

[402] See ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *ʾUrīd an ʾAtaḥaddith ʾilā al-ʾIkhwān* (Lucknow: al-Majmaʿ al-ʾIslāmī, n.d.), pp. 19-26.

[403] ʿAbdullāh al-ʿAqīl, *Min ʾAʿlām al-Daʿwah wa al-Ḥarakah al-ʾIslāmiyyah al-Muʿāṣirah* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawzīʿ wa al-Nashr, 2002), p. 133.

writings of Mawlānā Mawdūdī that, over-influenced by a political slant, deviate from the straight path. Other *ʿulamāʾ* of India also stood up to refute the arguments of Mawlānā Mawdūdī, but they were by and large contentious, unproductive, far from justice and integrity, and marked with excesses. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's book presented a balanced and sincere attempt to express the reservations that he had been having for quite some time. As an implementation of the Prophetic maxim, *Religion is advice*, this book is a model in its effort to proclaim the truth, to hold as its sole motivation and criterion the will to correct or perfect religious understanding. It neither arises from nor leads to sectarian or political factionalism and fanaticism. A critique written in this spirit is not marred by any effort to please a particular group, no matter how strong the writer's connection with that group may be, nor by timidity before a particular individual, no matter how great that individual may be in the writer's judgement. It is an independent scholarly assessment.

Shaykh Nadwī says regarding his contentions with Mawlānā Mawdūdī:

> The basis for my attraction to, impression of, and contact with Mawlānā Mawdūdī was the publications of the Jamāʿah, those critical articles which he wrote in refutation of Western civilisation, its philosophy of life and the contemporary materialistic view. Most of these articles were published as a collection in a book titled *Tanqīḥāt*. In this regard, there was agreement between myself and Mawlānā Mawdūdī, like the agreement of a child with an elder, or a young writer with an experienced writer. But this was not the case with his interpretation which manifested itself in his other books like *al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-ʾArbaʿah al-ʾAsāsiyyah fī al-Qurʾān, Tafhīmāt* and *Rasāʾil wa Masāʾil*. This is because my situation was completely different from that of an English-educated youngster who gains his understanding of ʾIslām totally from the books of Mawlānā Mawdūdī or from some other thinker and writer, and not from the fundamental sources of ʾIslām, the Qurʾān and Sunnah, and from an ʾIslāmic environment and education.
>
> Due to my direct religious education, my access to the books of the past and later scholars far more knowledgeable in the Qurʾān and Sunnah, who had the power of independent judgement in their thinking and views, and in-depth and expansive studies, I could not consider Mawlānā Mawdūdī as a unique ʾIslāmic thinker, who was rarely found in the past centuries. I considered his fundamental merit to lie in his intelligence, sharp mind, immense ability in writing, and presenting his case in an influential contemporary style. And I still acknowledge these aspects of his.[404]

Shaykh Nadwī agreed with Mawlānā Mawdūdī that the "establishment of religion" is an obligation that the ʾIslāmic Sharīʿah makes incumbent:

> As far as I know, we do not find any differences among the *ʿulamāʾ* with regard to striving to establish a power and authority which can practically apply the rule of God on humanity, promulgate His injunctions and limits on society so there does not come any opposing power, force, system or government which casts the people into conflict and tribulation, as referred to in the verse, "Go on fighting them

[404] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, vol. 1, p. 165.

till there remains no corruption, and authority in its entirety belongs to God alone" (*Sūrat al-ʾAnfāl*, 8: 39).

It is essential to gain power and authority whereby the Muslim community is able to fulfil the responsibility of commanding and prohibiting. Verbal *daʿwah* and encouragement is not sufficient. It is for this reason that the Qurʾān and the language of revelation preferred the words *al-ʾAmr* (command) and *al-Nahiy* (prohibition). Both these words require some sort of power and authority so that man has the ability to command and prohibit. God says, "You are the best of all nations which has been sent to the world, you enjoin good and forbid evil, and you believe in God" (*Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān*, 3: 110) and, "Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong; those who do this are the successful ones" (*Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān*, 3: 104). On the basis of these Qurʾānic verses and absolute texts, the Muslims are commanded to acquire this power, authority, and strength; and to strive and struggle for it. It is not permissible to give this up or display shortcomings in this regard under any condition.[405]

However, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan felt that Mawlānā Mawdūdī uses the "establishment of religion" in a very restrictive sense:

> The words "establishment of religion" cannot be made synonymous with mere efforts to establish an ʾIslāmic state. These words have a wider and more comprehensive meaning than is suggested by their use in the texts of many contemporary ʾIslāmic writers […] These words are mentioned once in the Qurʾān, "He has placed a path for you in the religion, the very same path towards which He had ordered Nūh, and the order of which We sent to you, and the path towards which We had ordered ʾIbrāhīm, Mūsā and ʿĪsā, establish the religion and do not cause divisions therein. That toward which you call the *mushrikīn* weighs heavily upon them. God chooses for Himself whomsoever He wills and guides to Himself whomever turns to Him" (*Sūrat al-Shūrā*, 42: 13). The context of this verse clearly and emphatically demonstrates that it refers to religion in all its aspects and with all its teachings, beliefs, acts of worship and social relationships, and it does not refer solely to *Khilāfah*, government, acquisition of power and governance.[406]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan also opposed Mawlānā Mawdūdī in his ascribing to four fundamental terms in the Qurʾān, *ʾilāh*, *rabb*, *ʿibādah*, *dīn* (God, Lord, worship, religion) a specific political interpretation, in a manner which requires the establishment of ʾIslāmic statehood.[407] One of the matters on which Shaykh Nadwī advised the Jamāʿat ʾIslāmī was the need to pay particular attention to *tarbiyah* and spirituality, so that the political aspect does not impose itself over all other aspects of religion.[408]

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī understood the concerns of Shaykh Nadwī:

[405] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Tafsīr al-Siyāsī li al-ʾIslām* (Cairo: Dār Āfāq al-Ghad, n.d.), pp. 143-44.
[406] *Ibid.*, p. 150.
[407] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
[408] ʿAbdullāh al-ʿAqīl, *Min ʾAʿlām al-Daʿwah wa al-Ḥarakah al-ʾIslāmiyyah al-Muʿāṣirah* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawzīʿ wa al-Nashr, 2002), p. 130.

The Shaykh had reservations about the presentation of certain concepts and some means and programmes adopted by certain ʾIslāmic workers to achieve ʾIslāmic rule working for the establishment of an ʾIslāmic state to establish the religion of God on earth. We see this in his book, *al-Tafsīr al-Siyāsī li al-ʾIslām* […] and from there, stressing the need for governance and a state, as though this is the one and only purpose of *daʿwah*; committing excesses in highlighting this aspect as though it is the objective and goal of ʾIslām, in the sense that if the *duʿāt* turned away from this aspect, the door of *daʿwah* would be shut in their faces, the path would be sealed off to them, knowledge would no longer remain with them, and there would be no benefit or meaning in their existence.[409]

It is worth mentioning that Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī did not agree with all the arguments in *al-Tafsīr al-Siyāsī li al-ʾIslām*; he also did not like the title in its Arabic version. He said. "I would have preferred the book to have another title because the present title makes reference to something specific and some secularists will infer an incorrect meaning from it." Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan listened to this criticism with respect and humility. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī then wrote to him saying, "What is important to me is that you are not offended by criticism. Instead, you ask for it and accept it from those who are junior to you in age and capability. You follow ʿUmar ﷺ when he said, 'May God shower mercy on the person who presents my faults to me.'"[410]

The movement for ʾIslāmic literature

According to Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, good and beautiful writing is eloquent expression which stirs the soul, arouses wonder and expands the horizons of thought.[411] In its broadest definition, "it is nothing but an expression of life, feelings and ecstasy in a style that is understood and moving."[412] What gives to literary expression its enduring spirit and vitality, even immortality, are "the elements of sincerity and honesty."[413] He meant by that an integrity on the part of writers so that they write about what is important, good and ennobling, and are not motivated by mean desires to impress, distract, merely amuse or titillate, at the cost of demeaning human experience or restricting its potential, "Our need, the need of this era, and the need of the Arab world in particular is a literature which is purposeful, sound, filled with vitality, pulsating with

[409] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿArafṭuh*, p. 122.
[410] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAʿlām*, pp. 81-82, citing Mullā al-Qārī, *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, k. *al-ʾĀdāb*, b. *al-Shafaqah wa al-Raḥmah ʿalā al-Khalq* (Damascus; Dār al-Fikr, 2002).
[411] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Naẓarāt fī al-ʾAdab* (Amman: Dār al-Bashīr, 1990), p. 22.
[412] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[413] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

strength, bearing a message that is lofty, heavenly, humane, ʾIslāmic and universal."[414]

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan was probably the first in our time to draw attention to the need for an ʾIslāmic literature, to try to set down its objectives and principles, and detail its diverse and copious sources and materials. His novel approach to the matter was first presented to Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī in Damascus, when he was chosen as its contributing member, in an essay titled *Naẓrah Jadīdah ʾilā al-Turāth al-ʾAdabī al-ʿArabī* (A new look at the Arabic literary legacy). He rejects the concept of literature as a convention-ridden craft limited to the tiring skills of flatterers or pedants. Rather, literature is the expression of perceptions, ideas and feelings that have struck or moved the writer deeply, with the result that his expression is naturally beautiful and its truth strikes the reader. The beauty is then not just in the craft of choosing and arranging words but also in the underlying concept, the underlying perception and thought. One of Shaykh Nadwī's favourite examples of the naturally beautiful literary expression was, "It is said that a dog once asked a gazelle, why can I not join you when you know how well I can run and how much strength I possess? The gazelle replied, because you run at your master's command whereas I run for myself."

In the book that followed, *Naẓarāt fī al-ʾAdab*, Shaykh Nadwī explains the fundamentals of what he understands by ʾIslāmic literature, its meaning and nature, its forgotten domains, its distinctive aspirations and characteristics.[415] ʾIslāmic literature is the expression of human life and the world experienced and communicated from an ʾIslāmic perspective, with a constructive artistic intent, not a pointless distraction to kill time. There is no limit on subject matter or disciplines, except that the matter and manner should normally fall within the very wide boundaries of what is permissible in ʾIslām. Its aim should be to delight and inform and instruct, in a way that is affecting and captivating, which impacts and inspires the ṣoul to high-minded endeavour, and convinces the reader that the way to lasting progress and happiness is through rightly guided knowledge and action.

Regarding the general character and function of ʾIslāmic literature, Shaykh Nadwī wrote:

I consider literature to be like an animate organism with an affectionate heart, a perceptive conscience, a sensitive spirit, a firm belief and a particular vision. It must feel pain with all that causes pain and experience joy with all that brings joy. If literature is not like that, it will be a literature that is wooden, asleep, dead and inert. Such literature is better likened to the antics of a clown or the exertions of a gymnast.

[414] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[415] See Dr ʿAbd al-Quddūs ʾAbū Ṣāliḥ, *Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī wa Rābiṭah al-ʿĀlam al-ʾIslāmī al-ʿĀlimiyyah* in *Majallāt al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī* (Special Issue on ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 158.

Literature is not merely a tool for diverting, amusing the self or the passing of time [...] Rather, it is one of the greatest means of reaching noble goals and making an impact on the human soul.

Shaykh Nadwī then gives the poetry of ʾIqbāl as an example, saying:

There is no good in the composition of a poet nor in the voice of a singer if he does not pour life and ardour into his community. There is no blessing in an enchanting song if the only benefit the garden derives from it is listlessness, inactivity, wilting and drying up. The best act of kindness in any discipline of knowledge and literature is eternal life [...] What is the value of an ember that burns swiftly and becomes swiftly extinguished? What is the benefit of a valuable pearl or a glittering sea-shell which causes no movement in the waves nor any trembling in the ocean? Nations cannot rise without a miracle, and there is no good in prose or poetry if it does not have an impact like that of the staff of Mūsā ﷺ.[416]

His opinion of over-contrived writing

Shaykh Nadwī complains in many of his writings about contrived literature, which was the output of litterateurs, writers, researchers and historians for long periods in the history of many peoples. These were people who only viewed literature as a craft and a discipline, as a tool of diversion and amusement, a way of displaying one's expertise, or as a means of realising certain private or extra-literary purposes. It was more like the art of embroidery, embellishment or perfumery:

It is most regrettable that for a long time literature remained at the mercy of these researchers and historians as regards its definition, description, presentation, analysis, weight, value, history and translation. Whoever became acquainted with a language began tasting the beauty of the literature of its people, or they came to know of its expressive power only through a narrow perspective and constricted perception. When a writer or historian authors his book describing literature and the litterateur, and presents examples of prose and eloquent writing, he will select those that are most embellished, which have the largest treasure of words and contrived rhetoric. Others will come after him, identify his mistakes, either confine themselves to quoting what the previous author had selected, or follow his methodology of quoting and selecting texts. They do not exert themselves to present the treasures of literature in a new way, unearthing rarities from the buried literary treasure. In this way, one colour of literature pervades all the colours and styles of literature. Many students of literature, even those who are specialists and researchers in this field, feel that the literature of the ʾIslāmic community has lost its strength and that all its treasures have been unearthed. They feel that it is a waste of time to go back to it and search for something new in it.

[416] *Ibid.*

Whereas in fact all that has been unearthed and presented in the literary journals are just a few handfuls from an ocean.[417]

Shaykh Nadwī also drew attention to the fact that literary texts go beyond the books normally categorised under the heading of *literature* and include the books of *ḥadīth*, biographies of the Prophet ﷺ, history of different classes of people, biographies of eminent individuals and their journeys. They include books written on the subject of reform, religion, morals and social gatherings. They also include academic and religious researches, books of admonition, *tasawwuf*, and the books in which authors recorded their thoughts, life experiences, observations, impressions, and in which they recounted their lives. Those who wrote such literary works "were believers who were governed by an ideology or belief. They wrote for themselves in response to the call of their conscience and belief. This ignited their talents, poured forth their thoughts and fired their hearts. Ideas thus came to them as a flood and the words flowed in response. Their writings had an impact on the hearts of their readers because they emanated from a heart and would only settle in a heart."[418]

His opinion on imported literary fashions

Modern Western literature and its different schools have been able to penetrate to one degree or another into most contemporary texts, carrying with them derisive attitudes to religion and religious authority, and the moral and societal decadence consequent of those attitudes. Many educated Arab Muslims and others brought those trends to their peoples using the same expressions, repeating the same ideas and adopting the same concepts, with little concern for the consequences of doing so. In this way, Muslim readers found themselves falling under the influence of these modern Western literary fashions. Indeed, they were compelled to study them in college courses dedicated to literary studies and to write essays on them. The philosophies of these Western literary schools thus became an inseparable part of the make-up of Muslim youth in the literary field:

I have a personal and direct connection with Western literature. Let alone from a deep and penetrating study of this literature, even from a cursory reading of it you will find *a fifth column* operating there. It is that poisoned literature which the French Revolution gave birth to, that was nurtured by the moral decadence and licentiousness of Europe and fed by Communism. It is that morally depraved literature which plants hypocrisy in the hearts, irrigates them with passions, undermines the pillars of society, destroys the family unit, mocks at every virtue, derides every civility and order, and beautifies to the reader the life of enjoyment, transitory benefit, and the seizing of

[417] From his introduction to Muḥammad al-Rābiᶜ al-Ḥasanī, *al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī wa Silatuh bi al-Ḥayāh* (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2005), pp. 2-3.
[418] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Naẓarāt fī al-ʾAdab*, p. 32.

opportunities. It reduces history to a materialistic struggle, and human life and the movement of things to wealth and sex.[419]

His call for ʾIslāmic literature

Shaykh Nadwī was at the forefront of those who called for the emancipation of literature from those who controlled it, its liberation from the clutches of those who belonged to deviated and misleading trends and philosophies. One outcome of this effort was his compilation in two parts of *Mukhtārāt min ʾAdab al-ʿArab*, with its powerful introduction. Another outcome was the international gathering to discuss ʾIslāmic literature which Shaykh Nadwī arranged at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ in April 1981 (Jumādā ʾĀkhar 1401 AH). A large number of figures from the ʾIslāmic world, *ʿulamāʾ*, litterateurs and thinkers, attended this meeting and considered it to have been a success. ʾUstādh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Rafat Pashā wrote to Shaykh Nadwī, "God alone knows the wonderful effect this visit had on us, the love which it engendered between us and your students, and the desire which it instilled in us to return to that place which is inhabited by you and those who live in your company."[420]

Shaykh Nadwī was quite clear that ʾIslāmic literature does not oppose other literatures or international literature, but each society's literature has and should have distinctive "goals, foundations, fields of operation and objects." What concerned him was that certain influences were undermining the cultural integrity and independence of Muslim societies and undermining their fabric and their foundations:

> One of the most recent and clear examples in the Arab lands is the influence of socialism and communism on the literature and disciplines of these lands. We now have a generation whose emotions, thoughts and sentiments are such that if they have not abandoned ʾIslām or are not antagonistic towards it, they at least do not work for its well-being.
>
> From here we can gauge that ʾIslāmic literature and ʾIslāmic sciences have this trait which I made reference to, namely that, they do not conflict with world literatures, but instead, remove them from darkness to light, from deviation to righteousness.[421]

The League for ʾIslāmic Literature

The first meeting held at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ gave strong impetus to the cause of an ʾIslāmic literature and recommended the establishment of an international league (*rābiṭah*) for ʾIslāmic litterateurs. This cause was further strengthened in discussions about ʾIslāmic literature held in the ʾIslāmic University of Madīnah in May 1982 (Rajab 1402 AH) and then in ʾImām Muḥammad ibn Saʿūd

[419] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Mujtamaʿ*, vol. 9 (Kuwait; March, 1997).
[420] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil ʾAʿlām*, p. 153.
[421] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *al-Mujtamaʿ*, vol. 9 (Kuwait; March, 1997).

ʾIslāmic University in April 1985 (Rajab 1405 AH). The Founding Committee of the League contacted Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī and presented him with their preliminary work and the wide contacts they had made. They urged him to form this league and he agreed. A sub-committee was deputed to prepare the announcement of the formation of the League for ʾIslāmic Literature, an announcement which was made in several newspapers and magazines on 24th November 1984 (2nd Rabīʿ al-ʾAwwal 1405 AH).

Many litterateurs from different parts of the ʾIslāmic world affiliated themselves to the League, and its first conference was held at Nadwah, in January 1986 (Rabīʿ al-Thānī 1406 AH), where the fundamental organisation of the League was mapped out, a committee of trustees appointed and Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī elected as life president.

The objectives of the League were to establish ʾIslāmic literature, highlight its distinguishing traits, past and present, establish rules for assessing literature, formulate a comprehensive programme for the promotion of ʾIslāmic literature and ʾIslāmic syllabi for modern literary disciplines, and to present the history of ʾIslāmic literature in the various languages of the Muslim peoples, collate distinguished literary works and translate them into the languages of the Muslim peoples and other languages of the world, paying special attention to: literature for children; explanatory critique of the misguiding literary schools; emphasis on the universality of ʾIslāmic literature; strengthening ʾIslāmic ties to encourage believing generations; formulating an ʾIslāmic persona that takes pride in its upright religion and great heritage; providing for the publication of the works of League members and protecting their literary rights and those of the League.

The League laid down a number of principles for the realisation of its objectives and for the selection of its members:

1. ʾIslāmic literature is an artistic and objective expression of man, life and the universe in accordance with ʾIslāmic sentiment.
2. Eloquent Arabic language is the first language of ʾIslāmic literature; it rejects colloquial language and any appeals to it.
3. It is a guide for the ʾIslāmic community and a responsibility before God. It shall adhere to and is responsible for participating in saving the ʾIslāmic community from its current problems, and it shall seek its guidance from the light of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.
4. It is the literature of ʾIslāmic peoples and it shall portray the ʾIslāmic image of human life and its purpose.
5. ʾIslāmic literature rejects any efforts to sever the link between old and modern literature by any claims to development, ingenuity or modernity. It holds that the roots of the contemporary are firmly linked to the old. It shall achieve its goals through the bond between subject-matter and form, and will open its heart to the benefits of modern literary disciplines.
6. The bond of ʾIslām is the essential bond between all members of the League.

The programme of the League and its success

As discussed in the previous chapter, the moderation and wisdom of Shaykh Nadwī's programme for the League was an aspect of his *daʿwah*. Here, it suffices to present an affirmation of Shaykh Nadwī's goal by the words of ʾUstādh ʿAbd al-Quddūs ʾAbū Ṣāliḥ:

> As for his programme which became the programme of the League of ʾIslāmic Literature, I spoke about it several times in the editorials of the periodical, *al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī* and in its general meetings and conferences. One of the things which I said was, "Every fair-minded person who has followed the positions and publications of the League, and the conventions and conferences which it held, will testify that this League follows its ends and means and diverse activities according to the programme it adopted from its distinguished president, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī. It is a programme of wisdom, moderation, abstention from fanaticism, and inviting towards God with wisdom and sound admonition." I also said, "It is a programme based on advising the rulers sincerely and having good relations with them."[422]

The objectives and activities of the League were greatly welcomed across the ʾIslāmic world, and high hopes were placed in it. ʾUstādh ʿAbd al-Quddūs ʾAbū Ṣāliḥ further says:

> This then is the League of ʾIslāmic Literature, which reached unimaginable heights through the efforts, direction and blessed supplications of the Shaykh. It has become, and all praise is due to God, an ʾIslāmic safe-haven and a mature gift from among the products of the ʾIslāmic awakening, a symbol of moderation, far removed from fanaticism, fully prepared for its goals, with a determination to adhere to the programme laid down by its distinguished Shaykh. One of the supplications which the Shaykh privately reported to me while we were in the Ḥaram was, "I supplicate God to inspire the rulers and responsible people in the Arab and ʾIslāmic worlds to use ʾIslāmic literature as a means to produce a new generation which believes in God, which holds on to ʾIslāmic values, which is proud of its upright religion and its great heritage."[423]

Positions and honours

Positions

In 1948/1367 AH Shaykh Nadwī was appointed to serve on the Organising Committee of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ and became its deputy head of educational affairs the following year. After the death of ʿAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī in 1954/1373 AH, he was appointed as head. Then, in 1961/1380 AH, following the death of his brother, Dr Sayyid ʿAbd al-ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī, he was

[422] *Majallāt al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 14.
[423] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

elected as General Secretary of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. With the assistance of his friend, ʿAbd al-Salām al-Qidwāʾī Nadwī, he established a centre for ʾIslāmic studies in 1943/1361 AH, under whose auspices he organised Qurʾānic and *ḥadīth* study circles.

Shaykh Nadwī also set up a council to convey ʾIslām to the Hindus, which published articles and treatises on ʾIslām in the English language. He established al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʾIslāmī in Lucknow in 1958/1377 AH, which is very active in the academic field and has published many books in English, Urdu and Arabic. He participated in the establishment of a Religious Education Board for Uttar Pradesh in 1960/1379 AH and served as its head for a time; he also established the All India ʾIslāmic Advisory Board in 1964/1383 AH; and the All India Muslim Personal Law Board in 1972/1391 AH. He set up the movement *Message to Humanity* in 1974/1393 AH. He called for the first international council on ʾIslāmic literature to be held at Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ in 1981/1401 AH.

He served as head of Dār al-Muṣannifīn in Azamgarh, India; as member of the Advisory Committee of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, India; as member of the All India ʾIslāmic Advisory Board; and as member of the Higher Advisory Board of the ʾIslāmic University in ʾIslāmabad, Pakistan.

He was elected to membership of the Arabic Language Institute of Damascus in 1956/1375 AH, and was member of the Founding Committee of the Muslim World League in 1961/1380 AH. He chaired the first session for the establishment of the Muslim World League in Makkah in 1962/1381 AH on behalf of the Grand Muftī of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʾIbrāhīm ʾĀl al-Shaykh. At this first session, attended by King Saʿūd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd, King ʾIdrīs al-Sanūs of Libya, and other notable figures, he presented the main arguments of *ʾIslām is above Nationalities and Tribal Solidarities*. He was a member of the League of ʾIslāmic Universities from its inception; of the Arabic Language Institute of Jordan from 1980/1400 AH; and of the Royal Institute for Studies in ʾIslāmic Civilisation of Jordan from 1983/1403 AH. He served as the head of the International League for ʾIslāmic Literature; Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Oxford Centre for ʾIslāmic Studies; Head of Jāmiʿat al-Hudā in Nottingham, UK; member of the Higher International Academy for ʾIslāmic Propagation in Cairo; member of the League of ʾIslāmic Universities in Rabat; member of the Arabic Language Institute in Cairo; member of the International ʾIslāmic Welfare Organisation in Kuwait; member of the Constitutional Assembly of the World ʾIslāmic Conference in Beirut; and member of the ʾIslāmic Centre in Geneva. Indeed, we cannot list all the ʾIslāmic universities, educational institutions and *daʿwah* organisations that made him a member.

These different institutes and organisations valued him as a member both to recognise his knowledge and merit, and to benefit from his experience

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and good counsel. For example, ʾUstādh Khalīl Mardam Baygh, the head of the Arabic Academy in Damascus, wrote to him on 3rd February 1958 (13th Rajab 1377 AH), "In its session on 31st January 1958 (10th Rajab 1377 AH), the Arabic Academy of Damascus decided to choose you as an ambassador because of your wide knowledge, in-depth research into Arabic culture, and your much appreciated efforts in this field."[424] For his part, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan did not accept assocaition with these ʾIslāmic institutes for merely ceremonial reasons. Rather, he always strove to guide them sincerely and correctly with good counsel. That is what was expected of him. Shaykh Muḥammad Sarūr al-Ṣabbān, the General Secretary of the Muslim World League, wrote to him:

> It has been decided that the second sitting of the ʾIslāmic Conference be held during the *ḥajj* season this year on 15th April 1965 (14th Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1384 AH). It is hoped that distinguished figures from the ʾIslāmic world and opinion makers will meet to look into matters affecting the Muslims, to derive procedures which would specify means and ends to workers in the ʾIslāmic field in different parts of the world. There is no doubt that one of the matters which the conference must study and resolve is the position of ʾIslāmic *daʿwah* among contemporary ideologies. Countries and ʾIslāmic parties are confused about the various ideologies and unable to adopt the correct solution which ʾIslām presents. One of the most important activities of the League is to present an ʾIslāmic perspective on all issues so that our ʾIslāmic communities may stand on correct ʾIslāmic foundations, free of any inconsistency and weakness. Since you are one of the experts in this field and you have a good share of studies and experience, you deserve to be the main advisor to the conference when discussing this issue. We hope that you will write a detailed paper on *ʾIslāmic daʿwah and its position among contemporary ideologies*. This topic will be under the remit of a special committee.[425]

Honours and awards

Among the awards that Shaykh Nadwī received was the King Faisal International Award for services to ʾIslām in 1980/1400 AH. When he received the official communiqué in this regard, he wrote to the head of the King Faisal International Award Committee that, the award having been announced without his prior knowledge, he had "no alternative but to accept it out of respect for the deceased King Faisal, an advocate of ʾIslāmic solidarity, and in appreciation of his ʾIslāmic services." He made it clear that it is "better for people working in the service of ʾIslām to receive their reward in the hereafter." Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī said while congratulating him on behalf

[424] *Ibid*., p. 135.
[425] *Ibid*., pp. 98-100.

of the Sharīʿah Faculty of Qatar University, "The Award is honoured and shall progress by someone like you receiving it."[426]

He was granted an honorary doctorate in literature by Kashmir University in 1981/1401 AH. A literary gathering to pay tribute to him was held in Istanbul 1996/1416 AH on the occasion of the Fourth Conference of the World League of ʾIslāmic Literature. It was attended by a large number of senior *ʿulamāʾ*, thinkers, literati and intellectuals from all parts of the ʾIslāmic and Arab world. He was given the *ʾIslāmic Personality of 1998/1418 AH* award by *Dubai International Holy Qurʾān Award (DIHQA)* in December 1998 (Ramaḍān 1419 AH). In the same year, the International Sultan Ḥasan Bolkiah prize on the theme, *Biographies of ʾIslāmic Thinkers* was conferred on him by the Oxford Centre for ʾIslāmic Studies.

The Institute of Contemporary Studies in India conferred on him the newly created ʾImām Walī ʾAllāh Dihlawī Prize for 1999/1419 AH. The decision to do so was taken while he was still alive, but he died before the official announcement. Shaykh Muḥammad Rābiʿ al-Ḥasanī Nadwī accepted it on his behalf posthumously in Delhi on 5th November 2000 (7th Shaʿbān 1421 AH). The Arabic ʾIslāmic Organisation presented him with the ISESCO medal, also accepted on his behalf by Shaykh Muḥammad Rābiʿ al-Ḥasanī Nadwī and the head of educational affairs at Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, Dr ʿAbd ʾAllāh ʿAbbās Nadwī in Rabat on 23rd November 2000 (25th Shaʿbān 1421 AH).

These awards and honours did not deflect Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan from a lifetime of self-discipline and he donated all the money to charitable causes, masājid and institutes of ʾIslāmic education. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī writes, "It is well known that when the Shaykh was given the King Faisal International Award for services to ʾIslām, which, as far as I remember, was 300,000 Saudi riyal at that time. He donated the entire amount, some to the poor people of Makkah and Madīnah, and some to the poor people of India and to ʾIslāmic madāris in India […] He did the same with all the other prizes which he received, for example, the Sultan Brunei Award in ʾIslāmic History, and again with the *Dubai International Prize for the Qurʾān* when he was chosen as the *ʾIslāmic Personality of the Year* in 1998/1419 AH. This prize was one million dirham. Not a single cent from these prizes went into his pocket. Instead, he spent all of them for the cause of God."[427]

His meetings with kings, rulers and leaders

As we recorded earlier, after the death of his father during Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's early childhood, he and his older brother lived for a time in the

[426] *Ibid*., pp. 77-78.
[427] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, pp. 62-63.

palace of ʾAmīr Nūr al-Ḥasan Khān. This stay helped him in that it removed from his heart any awe of wealth and power.

He met King ʿAbd ʾAllāh ibn al-Sharīf al-Ḥusayn of Jordan on three occasions in 1951/1370 AH. At these meetings, he drew the king's attention to al-Masjid al-ʾAqṣā and the plight of Palestinian refugees. He met King Ḥusayn ibn Ṭalāl of Jordan in 1973/1392 AH as part of a delegation from the Muslim World League.

He addressed a letter to King Saʿūd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd in 1947/1366 AH, which was later published as *Between Taxation and Guidance*. He also met the King of Saudi Arabia during the founding session of the Muslim World League in Makkah in 1962/1381 AH.

The first of several meetings with ʾAmīr Fayṣal ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd was in 1963/1382 AH. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan respected him highly, considered him a distinguished person, a champion of ʾIslāmic solidarity, one of the famous Arab and Muslim kings in his resoluteness and intelligence, and in his far-sightedness and sagacity. Shaykh Nadwī wrote to him on several occasions with regard to his impressions and observations about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Muslims. The king would reply to these letters in a wonderful manner. For example, the king wrote to him on 9th June 1965 (9th Safar 1385 AH), "We fully understand what you have written. We appreciate your noble sentiments and value your ʾIslāmic spirit and sense of honour. We desire to emphasise to you that we will never agree to, and it will never be possible for us to agree to anything that is in conflict with our pure religion and its upright teachings."[428]

He also met King Khālid ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd and King Fahd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd in the course of several visits to Saudi Arabia. He addressed advisory letters to the kings and princes of Saudi Arabia in which he expressed his views and observations. He drew their attention to the fact that Ḥijāz has a special identity, and a special message and position, which must always be safeguarded.

He met King al-Ḥasan al-Thānī of Morocco in 1976/1396 AH. He spoke to him about how the Muslims are waiting for and in need of a distinguished leader and astute believer who would distinguish himself by his sincerity, conviction, firm determination and strong heart.

He met Prince Sulṭān ibn Muḥammad Qāsimī, the ruler of Sharjah, on several occasions. Shaykh Nadwī travelled to the United Arab Emirates in 1974/1394 AH at the invitation of the Prince, who had visited him at his residence in Lucknow in 1980/1400 AH. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan had welcomed him on that occasion with the following well-known adage, "How wonderful to see a prince at the door of a pauper. How repugnant to see a pauper at the door of a prince."

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[428] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAʿlām*, p. 161.

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan met ʿAlī ʿAbd ʾAllāh Ṣāliḥ, the head of the Yemeni Republic, in Sanaa in 1984/1404 AH. Also in 1984/1404 AH General Muḥammad Ziyā al-Ḥaqq (Zia-ul Haq), the President of the Republic of Pakistan, visited him while in Karachi. The Shaykh presented to the General a marble model of the Dome of the Rock, which had been presented to him by the Faculty of Sciences in Jordan, no doubt hinting to him that saving al-Masjid al-ʾAqṣā was one of the responsibilities of the Muslim head of a large Muslim country like Pakistan. His last meeting with President Ziyā al-Ḥaqq was in 1986/1406 AH.

His excellence and the praise of *ʿulamāʾ* for him

The people of knowledge, insight, rectitude and piety collectively spoke in glowing terms of the person and work of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. When the masses speak highly of someone, it is not considered an argument in favour of their acceptability in the sight of God. But if the people of knowledge, insight, rectitude and piety of ones time testify in their favour, it undoubtedly is considered a deserving argument. It is of the highest importance that his followers, supporters and companions strive for the same qualities of rectitude, uprightness, correct belief, piety and concern for the hereafter, and distinguish themselves among their contemporaries by their understanding and practice of the religion and their personal conduct. In this section I present the testimonies of his teachers and senior *ʿulamāʾ* of his time.

Shaykh Khalīl ibn Muḥammad al-Yamānī addressed him as, "More beloved to me than myself and my wealth! My brother, the respected ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī, may God protect him […] I convey to him the greeting of peace, and the yearning, longing and desire to meet him from the depth of my heart."[429]

Muftī ʾAmīn al-Ḥusaynī said, "A sincere believer who is able to diagnose the illness and prescribe the appropriate medication."[430]

Shaykh Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bayṭār al-Dimashqī said in a letter to him, "O noble friend and loyal confidant, whenever I think of you or speak about you among my people, I think of your extensive knowledge, your noble character, the gracefulness of your speech, and the pleasure you impart to your companion through your open-heartedness, and your humorous and enjoyable anecdotes."

Dr Muṣṭafā al-Sibāʿī said in his introduction to the book, *Saviours of ʾIslāmic Spirit*, "From among the leading figures of this blessed movement is ʾUstādh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī, the author of this book. He is a scholar who is

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[429] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[430] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ʿAraftuh*, p. 102.

palace of ʾAmīr Nūr al-Ḥasan Khān. This stay helped him in that it removed from his heart any awe of wealth and power.

He met King ʿAbd ʾAllāh ibn al-Sharīf al-Ḥusayn of Jordan on three occasions in 1951/1370 AH. At these meetings, he drew the king's attention to al-Masjid al-ʾAqṣā and the plight of Palestinian refugees. He met King Ḥusayn ibn Ṭalāl of Jordan in 1973/1392 AH as part of a delegation from the Muslim World League.

He addressed a letter to King Saʿūd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd in 1947/1366 AH, which was later published as *Between Taxation and Guidance*. He also met the King of Saudi Arabia during the founding session of the Muslim World League in Makkah in 1962/1381 AH.

The first of several meetings with ʾAmīr Fayṣal ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd was in 1963/1382 AH. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan respected him highly, considered him a distinguished person, a champion of ʾIslāmic solidarity, one of the famous Arab and Muslim kings in his resoluteness and intelligence, and in his far-sightedness and sagacity. Shaykh Nadwī wrote to him on several occasions with regard to his impressions and observations about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Muslims. The king would reply to these letters in a wonderful manner. For example, the king wrote to him on 9th June 1965 (9th Safar 1385 AH), "We fully understand what you have written. We appreciate your noble sentiments and value your ʾIslāmic spirit and sense of honour. We desire to emphasise to you that we will never agree to, and it will never be possible for us to agree to anything that is in conflict with our pure religion and its upright teachings."[428]

He also met King Khālid ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd and King Fahd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʾĀl Saʿūd in the course of several visits to Saudi Arabia. He addressed advisory letters to the kings and princes of Saudi Arabia in which he expressed his views and observations. He drew their attention to the fact that Ḥijāz has a special identity, and a special message and position, which must always be safeguarded.

He met King al-Ḥasan al-Thānī of Morocco in 1976/1396 AH. He spoke to him about how the Muslims are waiting for and in need of a distinguished leader and astute believer who would distinguish himself by his sincerity, conviction, firm determination and strong heart.

He met Prince Sulṭān ibn Muḥammad Qāsimī, the ruler of Sharjah, on several occasions. Shaykh Nadwī travelled to the United Arab Emirates in 1974/1394 AH at the invitation of the Prince, who had visited him at his residence in Lucknow in 1980/1400 AH. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan had welcomed him on that occasion with the following well-known adage, "How wonderful to see a prince at the door of a pauper. How repugnant to see a pauper at the door of a prince."

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[428] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAʿlām*, p. 161.

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a reformer and a devoted *dāᶜī*. Ever since God blessed him with knowledge, he has continued calling to God with his pen and tongue, through his numerous journeys to the Arab lands and ʾIslāmic countries, and his tours which were specifically for the work of *daᶜwah*. He continued with all this and is today considered to be the most distinguished ʾIslāmic reformer from India. He has students spread in every country, and his books and writings are known for their academic accuracy, in-depth understanding of the latencies of the Sharīᶜah, accurate diagnosis of the problems of the ʾIslāmic world, and the means of treating these problems. In addition to all this, he distinguished himself by an illustrious soul, noble prophetic character, and a way of life which reminds you of the scholars of the virtuous past in his abstinence, asceticism, worship and noble-mindedness."[431]

Shahīd Sayyid Quṭb said of him, "I got to know him personally and through his writings. I recognised in him the heart of a Muslim and the intellect of a Muslim. I recognised in him a person who lives by ʾIslām, for the sake of ʾIslām, on an excellent understanding of ʾIslām [...] this is the testimony which I give for the sake of God."[432]

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī said, in appreciation of the sentiments, zeal and spirit evident in the writings of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, "This is the ʾIslām which none but a perceptive and soaring spirit can serve. As for the spirits that are senseless and ruined, they have no share whatsoever in this."[433]

Shaykh ʾAḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz al-Mubārak said of him, "He is a *dāᶜī* for ʾIslām and comes to its defence through his speeches and writings. He combines sound perception with wise application. He is from a branch of the Prophets' ﷺ family tree and a member of the family of al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ."[434]

Shaykh ᶜAlī al-Ṭanṭāwī, the litterateur, said, "For ʾIslām ʾAbū al-Ḥasan constructed in the hearts of his students strongholds stronger and more fortified than physical forts. He developed a small community of righteous scholars and devoted *duᶜāt* [...] I found that God honoured him and so perfected in him the qualities which are looked for in an ʾIslāmic *dāᶜī*."[435]

Shaykh Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Mashshāṭ, the jurist, said, "Nadwī is an erudite scholar who is inspired."[436]

Muftī Muḥammad Shafīᶜ, the jurist and grand Muftī of Pakistan said, as narrated to me by his son, Shaykh Muftī Muḥammad Taqī ᶜUthmānī, "ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī is inspired by God."

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[431] Muṣṭafā al-Sibāᶜī, Introduction to *Rijāl al-Fikr wa Daᶜwah fī al-ʾIslām*, vol. 1, p. 79.
[432] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜAraftuh*, p. 203.
[433] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[434] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
[435] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Fī Masīrat al-Ḥayāh*, Introduction.
[436] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜAraftuh*, p. 201.

Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Fattāḥ ʾAbū Ghuddah described him in his book, *Ṣafaḥāt min Ṣabr al-ᶜUlamāʾ*, in the following words, "He is one of the senior figures of the era of divinely guided scholars and a righteous role-model. He is one of the most famous scholars, *duᶜāt*, guides and thinkers. He is the great scholar, outstanding fighter, and inviter towards God through his very existence, words and actions. When he writes or speaks, he provides food to the hearts and souls, and illuminates the intellects and minds. He is our *Mawlānā*, a man of virtue and excellence, Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī al-Ḥasanī Nadwī."[437]

He also said in a letter to him, "you were and still are, by the grace of God, that lofty example who reminds us of those past personalities whom God blessed with his love in their hearts, and the love of people for them by virtue of their love for God and His Messenger ﷺ. There is nothing strange in your being such, because a noble tree continues having flourishing branches, attractive colours, and a wonderful fragrance in every era and every place. All praise is due to God."[438] He also said about him, "He is the blessing of this era."[439]

Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Zarqāʾ, the jurist, said, "He is the proof of ʾIslām and the Muslims in India." And, "He is a piece from our righteous predecessors whom God willed to live in our present age."[440]

Dr Mānīᶜ ibn Ḥammād al-Juhanī, the General Secretary of the International ʾIslāmic Federation of Student Organisations, said of him in a message sent to Nadwah, "He bore the responsibility of *daᶜwah* and reform, and travelled the world inviting to God and conveying the glad tidings of ʾIslām. [...] Through his perceptive thinking he steadied the falling movement of the Muslims in India. He never weakened when firm resolve was needed."

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rābiᶜ al-Ḥasanī Nadwī said of him, "A leader for the sons of ʾIslām in his self-respect for the sake of ʾIslām, striving for the honour of ʾIslām, defending its territory, and establishing its spirit and true nature."[441]

Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Ḥalīm ʾUways said of Shaykh Nadwī, "A man who never compromised his principles for a single day, who never begged at the door of anyone for a single day, and who never hankered after the world for a single day."[442]

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[437] ᶜAbd al-Fattāḥ ʾAbū Ghuddah, *Ṣafaḥāt min Ṣabr al-ᶜUlamāʾ*, p. 12.
[438] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAᶜlām*, p. 75.
[439] *al-Majallāt al-ʾAdab al-ʾIslāmī*, vol. 7 (2000; Special Issue on Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī), p. 13.
[440] *Ibid.*
[441] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜAraftuh*, p. 203.
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Shaykh Muḥammad Wāḍiḥ Rashīd Nadwī said of him, "A leader who wrote history and renewed ʾIslāmic thinking."[443]

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī wrote the following about him, "I testify that I love him, and I hope that is for the sake of God. I loved him for his abstinence, sincerity and devotion. I loved him for his balance and moderation. I loved him for the fact that his thinking was free from all falsehood, his heart was free from jealousy, his beliefs were free from all forms of polytheism, his worship was free from all forms of innovation, and his tongue was free from accusations and insinuations.

I loved him for he was frequently engrossed by weighty issues instead of bothering with minor matters, with realities as opposed to appearances, with meanings as opposed to results, and with depth as opposed to the superficial.

"I am not the only one who loved the great Shaykh. I think that every person who knew him and got close to him loved him in accordance with their knowledge of him and their proximity to him. […] There is nothing surprising in people differing about certain *ʿulamāʾ*, but they are all unanimous about ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. So much so, those who are not from his way of thinking and not upon his way have no alternative but to invite him to their gatherings because of the merits with which God blessed him, and which are found in very few people, 'God singles out through His mercy whom He wills. God is possessor of great bounty' (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2: 105)."[444]

He also said, "I and whoever else knew you felt, and I am not flattering you, that whatever merits God bestowed upon you are from among the salient qualities of the heirs of the Prophets ﷺ, deputies of the Messengers ﷺ, and the reformers in religion. These merits are portrayed in your clear thinking, living speech, ardent *daʿwah*, steadfast *taṣawwuf*, and honesty with God and your own self. In like manner, they are portrayed in the balance and moderation for which you are well-known in ʾIslāmic circles. This is what has given a great impact to your words, a large number of readers for your books, and the wide acceptance of your person among the Muslims and the ʾIslāmic groups, notwithstanding their different ways of thinking, and their various directions and ideologies. So deep is this, that those who differ with you or those whom you do not agree with in their opinions and ways, have no alternative but to appreciate you as you ought to be appreciated, to speak highly of you, and to acknowledge every merit of yours. These are from among the great bounties of God."[445]

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[443] *Ibid.*
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[445] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Rasāʾil al-ʾAʿlām*, pp. 78-79.

VII. HIS CHARACTER AND DEATH

His physical appearance

He was of medium height and slight build; he had a dark pale complexion, an ever smiling, illuminated face and a broad shining forehead. The traits of the righteous were visible on him. His eyes showed great intelligence, noble courage and extreme shyness. He was filled with spirit, energy, fervour, conviction, and constant anxiety and concern for the Muslims. His assemblies were those of knowledge, education and tuition. *Daʿwah* was embodied in his very being. He was always occupied with studying, researching, writing and composing. He undertook numerous journeys and travels. He never tired nor became bored with work, nor was he overcome by laziness and lethargy.

Shaykh al-Qaraḍāwī says while describing him when he saw him in his youth on his first visit to Egypt, "When the Shaykh visited Egypt in his youth, his beard was black, his face was radiant, his determination youthful, his spirit fiery and his sense of honour blazing. He carried the energy of youth and the wisdom of the mature."[446]

ʾUstādh ʾAḥmad Shirbāṣī says, "I met my brother, ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, for the first time in the winter of 1951/1370 AH at Dār al-Shubbān al-Muslimīn in Cairo after one of my Tuesday talks. He came to me with absolute respect and obvious humility on one of the Tuesday nights, asking me to permit him to deliver a talk on, *ʾIslām at the Crossroads*. I saw a man of slight build, thin legs, a brownish beard, wearing few clothes which were both light in weight and little in value. His gaze was deep and penetrating, the inflections of his voice were fine and captivating, with some hoarseness. Later I learnt that his voice was so on account of his constant efforts and endeavours. After this first brief meeting with him, the bonds of brotherhood and love were firmly established between us."[447]

ʾUstādh ʿAbd al-Quddūs ʾAbū Ṣāliḥ says, "Despite his Arab lineage and Ḥasanī appellation, he had Indian features, with ordinary characteristics, and he always wore spectacles. An intense natural tranquillity and an inclination towards meekness was at times misconstrued for submissiveness and timidity. It was as Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ had said when referring to his friend, 'He appeared weak and overpowered. But when there was a serious situation, he was like a ferocious lion.'"[448]

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[446] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
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His habits

Shaykh Nadwī was very particular about performing *ṣalāh* in congregation from a young age and waking up for *tahajjud ṣalāh*, reciting the Qurʾān and daily remembrance of God. This continued during his old age and times of weakness as well. On one occasion he went on foot from Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ to his house in Lucknow intending to perform the *ʿishā ṣalāh* at a nearby *masjid*. When he reached it, the *ṣalāh* was already over. So he went to another *masjid* and found that there too the people had completed their *ṣalāh*. He was most disturbed by this until someone informed him that a third *masjid* held the *ʿishā* congregation a little later. He reached this *masjid* and joined the congregation. He experienced inexplicable joy at this.

Performing the *ṣalāh* in congregation was his habit throughout his life and he was especially attentive on Fridays. He would take a ritual bath early, adorn himself appropriately, recite *Sūrat al-Kahf* before leaving for the *ṣalāh*, fulfil all the *sunan* and *mustaḥab* acts of Friday and the Friday *ṣalāh*, and then leave for the *masjid* before or immediately after the *ʾadhān*.

He was neat in his dress without being too formal. When he left to deliver a lecture or attend a gathering, he would put on a cloak.

He did not desire variety in food, but liked delicious and sweet foods. Rice was always an essential part of his meals. He liked meat cooked with vegetables, and considered Arab food to be the best, no doubt another aspect of his love for everything connected to the Arabs. He prefered soup to other foods because of its lightness.

When he was young, he practised several sports such as football, hunting, hockey, swimming and tennis. He later renounced such pastimes.

ʾUstādh ʾAḥmad Shirbāṣī says, "My brother, ʾAbū al-Ḥasan, was against all affectations. He was very simple in his clothing, food and bedding. He disliked excessive formalities and flatteries. He never attached any value to wealth throughout his life. His trust in God was above everything else. His perseverance in striving for whatever he believed in was proverbial, and his deep sincerity was the secret of his success where others failed."[449]

His daily routine

He would generally wake early in the latter part of the night and recite the Qurʾān. When dawn broke, he would engage in audible remembrance of God and then perform the *fajr ṣalāh*. He would then go for a walk while reciting *Sūrah Yā Sīn* and engaging in the remembrance of God. He would return, have

[449] ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī, *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn* (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-ʿĀlam li al-Kitāb al-ʾIslāmī, 4th edn. n.d.), Introduction, p. 23.

breakfast and offer *Ṣalāt al-Ḍuḥā*. He would then recite a portion of the Qurʾān and occupy himself with writing and replying to the many letters which came to him. He used to dictate 20-25 letters daily, however, once he dictated 55 letters in a single sitting. He would then perform the *ẓuhr ṣalāh*, have lunch, take a siesta and wake up an hour or less before *ʿaṣr*.

After the *ʿaṣr ṣalāh* he would sit till *maghrib* in order to meet visitors and guests. He would perform the *maghrib ṣalāh* and then offer *nafl ṣalāh* in which he recited about one and half *ʾajzāʾ* (parts) of the Qurʾān. On some occasions he would later sit down and continue in the remembrance of God. If he was in Raebareli, he would go to his house and sit with his family and leave shortly before the *ʿishā ṣalāh*. But if he was in Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, he would spend that time reading a book or holding a special meeting. He would then perform the *ʿishā ṣalāh* and have supper with others. He would walk a little, sit with people and converse with them for an hour or less.

When he became old and was afflicted with insomnia after 1977/1397 AH, he began sleeping after *fajr* for an hour or more. He was still regular with his abundant recitation of *Sūrah Yā Sīn*. In the last few years of his life, he would spend around two hours reciting this *sūrah* thirteen or more times. He used to supplicate for the past personalities of this *ʾummah*, its *duʿāt*, his family and associates. He would supplicate for them by mentioning their names, commencing with the *Khalīfah* of God's Messenger ﷺ, ʾAbū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. When he entered a village or city, he would recite *Sūrah Yā Sīn* and seek forgiveness for its deceased residents. Towards the latter part of his life, he began completing his daily devotions after the *fajr ṣalāh*, and supplicating for his associates by name.

His death

God blessed the life of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan Nadwī. He lived for around 86 years and was able to fully benefit from his intellect and faculties, working energetically in the field of *daʿwah*, reform, tutoring, teaching and writing, until he was afflicted by a partial stroke in April 1999 (Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1419 AH). This affected his right hand and leg and, in the beginning, his power of speech. His health was restored after a short time and he attended the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā *ṣalāh* in the *masjid* of Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. After a few days, he was able, by the grace of God, to write *Bism ʾAllāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*, In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, with his right hand. He also began to stand a little on his feet. Two months passed in illness and then he delivered an extempore speech in a huge gathering of the Tablīghī Jamāʿah in Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ. He was unable to attend the congregational *ṣalawāt* in the *masjid* except for the Friday *ṣalāh*. He would perform his *ṣalāh* seated, in his residence, in congregation with a select group of his companions.

It was the Shaykh's habit to spend the month of Ramaḍān in his village, Dāʾirah Shaykh ᶜAlam ʾAllāh in Raebareli. When the month of Ramaḍān approached, the doctors asked him to spend the month in Lucknow because medical facilities were available there. Dar al-ᶜUlūm Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ, and those who were affiliated to it, alongside those who worked there, and the residents of Lucknow were all fortunate to have Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī Nadwī's company in the blessed month. He kept the fasts and offered the *tarāwīḥ ṣalāh* for the first twenty days. He was energetic and enthusiastic with no apparent fatigue or burden. He would awaken for the night *ṣalāh* as was his custom, partake of *suḥūr*, perform the *fajr ṣalāh* and sleep. He would wake up after nine in the morning, offer two *rakᶜāt* of *ṣalāh*, recite the Qurʾān, complete his daily devotions, supplicate for his parents, teachers, for all those who did good to him, for the senior *ᶜulamāʾ*, *duᶜāt*, revivers and reformers. He would occasionally meet those who came to visit him, read his letters and reply to them, peruse some books and dictate certain matters if there was a need. He would rest between the *zuhr* and *ᶜaṣr ṣalawāt*, and sit for a short while after the *ᶜaṣr ṣalāh* to meet people. He would then engross himself in the remembrance of God, supplication and turning in devotion to God. He would open the fast with his guests and have supper with them immediately after the *maghrib ṣalāh*. He would rest for a short while and then perform the *ᶜishā* and *tarāwīḥ ṣalawāt* with his congregation. He would later meet guests, visitors and students for half an hour or more. He insisted on spending the last ten days at his birthplace and his health also favoured this because he had spent the first twenty days fasting and offering *ṣalāh* at night. The doctors placed their trust in God and permitted him to go.

It was a Wednesday morning, the 28th December (20th Ramaḍān) when he awoke from his sleep. He performed *ṣalāh*, completed his daily quota of Qurʾān recitation and remembrance of God and left at 10:00 am for Raebareli. He reached his village before the *ẓuhr ṣalāh* and spent two days there. On Friday the 31st December 1999 (23rd of Ramaḍān 1420 AH, 24th Ramaḍān in the Arab countries), he awoke at 9:00 am, completed his daily quota of remembrance of God, recited *Sūrah Yā Sīn* thirteen or fourteen times as he did habitually and supplicated for certain people by name. He took the ritual bath after 11:00 am, changed his clothes, and prepared himself for the Friday prayer. It had been his habit from a tender age to recite *Sūrat al-Kahf* before going to the Friday prayer. He asked for a Qurʾān and, while waiting for it, began reciting *Sūrah Yā Sīn* from memory. He did not complete the *sūrah* when his soul departed to its Master at around 11:50 am, before the Friday prayer. It was the last day of the twentieth century by the Greogrian calendar.

No sooner was his demise announced than a groups of his students and loved ones began arriving at his village. ᶜAllāmah Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rābiᶜ al-Ḥasanī Nadwī led the *janāẓah ṣalāh* at 10:15 pm on the 1st January (24th night of Ramaḍān) in a congregation whose size is estimated at 200,000. He

was buried in his family graveyard in the presence of family, relatives and a few administrators of Nadwat al-ᶜUlamāʾ to whom he had remained attached throughout his adult life.

The ʾIslāmic world was shaken by his death. The *janāzah ṣalāh* in absentia was performed for him in Makkah and Madīnah on 3rd Janurary (27th night of Ramaḍān). The newspapers and magazines in the Indian subcontinent and in the ʾIslāmic world were filled with articles about his life and achievements. Commemorative gatherings were held in all parts of the world. Statements lamenting his death were issued by councils, organisations and large ʾIslāmic institutions. They considered his passing an irreparable loss to the Muslims of India and the ʾIslāmic world that would not be compensated in the near future. Condolences from all parts of India and the world poured in. Funeral prayers in absentia and supplications in his favour were held in different places.

His death was a grave loss which touched Muslims of all classes and in distant lands in the east and west. Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī said in his farewell condolence to him, "In a year when leading *ᶜulamāʾ* departed, in the last ten days of the month of Ramaḍān, on a Friday, the most meritorious day of the week, on the last day of the Gregorian calendar, before the Friday prayer, the Shaykh had performed ablution, prepared for *ṣalāh*, commenced reciting *Sūrat al-Kahf*[450] from the Book of God as was his habit every Friday, the inevitable came to the unique personality, the distinguished *dāᶜī*, the eminent *ᶜallāmah*, of Arab origin, of the Ḥasanī lineage, of Indian nationality, and of international renown, the Shaykh of the *ʾummah*, its representative who spoke the truth, and the one who invited towards good, Sayyid ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī al-Ḥasanī Nadwī. His popularity is such that he needs no introduction. His greatness is such that words cannot do him justice."[451]

The foremost *ᶜulamāʾ* of al-ʾAzhar University issued a communiqué on the 5th January (29th Ramaḍān) praising him as the reviver of ʾIslām in the Indian subcontinent, as the founder of the ʾIslāmic awakening who took a balanced approach, and as the foremost ʾIslāmic scholar from among the *ᶜulamāʾ* of ʾIslām in the sight of God. They described him as, "An energetic ʾImām from among the leaders of *daᶜwah* and revival. The *Shaykh* of the *ʾUmmah*, its representative who spoke the truth, and the one who called towards good." It described him with the words of the poet:

A worker from a class that was never faulted; and from men who fulfilled their promise.

The communiqué went on to explain that his passing was similar to the passing of a martyr who goes to his Lord, pleased with Him and He with him. The field of endeavour still echoes with his *jihād* and his knowledge. The

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[450] It was in fact *Sūrah Yā Sīn* as we explained above.
[451] Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Shaykh ʾAbī al-Ḥasan Nadwī: Kamā ᶜAraftuh*, p. 9.

immediate good news is that of a believer who left this world ready for *ṣalāh* having done the ablution, that this happened towards the end of a noble month, the last of which promises salvation from the Fire. May God shower His abundant mercy on him. It is our hope that God will give us someone in his place to lead us once more. To God we belong and to Him is our return.

VIII. AFTERWORD

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan came of age in the later part of the fourteenth century of the *Hijrah*. He found his fellow-Muslims in India, as they were elsewhere, in a state of extreme weakness in the world and in a state of inward regress. He strove in the field of *daʿwah* and reform to return confidence to the Muslims and he informed them, with full conviction, that leadership of humankind was their duty and their destiny. Indeed, he argued forcefully that the future ruin or recovery of humankind was closely bound to their own ruin or recovery. So he came to write his famous book, *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn* (What did the world lose by the decline of the Muslims). The book appeared roughly a century after the collapse in 1857/1273 AH of Muslim political power in India. The *ʿulamāʾ* and reformers still consider it, quite rightly, as the book of our time in its power to evoke and awaken the Muslims' responsibility. The question is posed, another fifty years on, has it lost some of its potency?

Ever since leadership left the hands of the Muslims, the world has endured the hegemony of a relentlessly materialistic system and borne the consequent injustices and evils. Shaykh Nadwī identified it as a new *jāhiliyyah*. Under its rule, some parts of the world have made astonishing progress in material terms so that life seems easier and more comfortable, but the price paid is exorbitant. As human beings individually and collectively have become detached from the habits of religious reflection, so too their environment has been stripped of spiritual teachings, of virtues and moral principles that were the legacy of prophethood. In personal life, people have no criterion of value which they can consistently rely on, except for enjoyment and material gain; in political life it is power and supremacy; in social life, brutish patriotism; and in economic life, predatory competition. That would not seem so gross an over-statement if the case of this civilisation is measured by its enduring overall effects in the real world rather than by the promise of its good intentions in the worlds of political rhetoric and advertising imagery.

By and large, those who are committed to this civilisation, and there are substantial enclaves so committed in every nation-state, including the Muslim-majority states, are no more aware of the belief systems which underpin it, than they are aware of the rules that govern their speech. When they speak, they have a sense of themselves freely willing and choosing what to think and say; they are not aware of their obedience of the rules of language. Individual feelings and judgements about themselves are almost always focused on their own will and psychology, what they want or intend to do, how they feel about this or that particular thing or event. For all practical purposes, they have little awareness of, and so they do not feel or take responsibility for the overall outcomes of the structures and systems within which their lives are lived,

unless those outcomes impinge directly on their self-image or their immediate sphere of action. Thus, when Shaykh Nadwī identifies modern Western civilisation as a new *jāhiliyyah*, his argument is not that the people living within it are always and only striving individually for bad ends. Nor is it his argument that, faced with negative outcomes, people individually are not moved to regret and, perhaps also, to try to mitigate those outcomes if they can. Such an argument would be impossible for a believer to support. It entails believing that the All-Merciful has withdrawn His mercy from these people altogether, that their potential as creatures who can earn His pleasure is exhausted. If that were true, it would mean that *daʿwah* is to be undertaken in the expectation that God, who commanded it, has decreed that it shall fail. No, Shaykh Nadwī's entire life was dedicated to the opposite position, namely that *daʿwah* is a duty that must be done in the expectation that what God has decreed shall succeed, when, where and to the extent that He wills its success. His argument against modern Western civilisation is that, wherever it takes hold, it annuls or perverts the innate potential of human beings to answer to their Creator. They cease to affirm their dependence on Him, to know their indebtedness to Him, and so they do not refer to Him in the understanding, arrangement or conduct of their affairs. Instead, they refer, for those purposes, to something else.

In the pre-ʾIslāmic *jāhiliyyah* of the Arab peninsula, that referring to something else (in ʾIslāmic terminology, *shirk*) took the form of an intense tribalism, framed within idol-worship and superstition, a disposition to violent feuding to uphold the honour or *right*, or simply the supremacy of a clan or tribe. Yet, in that *jāhiliyyah*, universal human virtues were known and practised, magnanimity, hospitality, generosity, honouring of promises, independence of spirit and love of fine speech. In the absence of any belief in an afterlife, the Arab poetry of this period is marked by a strong sense of finitude, and intense, poignant celebration of the passing of clan glory, bodily strength, desire and love, of beauty, wine, words, and the graces of valour, fortitude and gift-giving. However these virtues dignified individual behaviour, yet they did not mark or define the Arabs as a society. Within the boundaries of clan loyalty, these virtues were honoured; in opposition to it, they were not recognised as virtues at all. The Arabs' attempts to unify as a nation, to secure independence from the imperial powers to the north and east, either failed or were short-lived; usury was rife and exacted with unpitying severity; wealth in the form of precious metals, livestock or luxury goods was intensely coveted and horded; the poor and the weak, except insofar as protected by clan allegiance and honour, were despised and mistreated; female infanticide was an accepted practice. It is not surprising that the Arabs were incapable of imagining that Makkah, whose pre-eminence as a centre for local pilgrimage which they were so anxious to preserve, would, once purified of *shirk*, become the focus of a global pilgrimage.

To that *jāhiliyyah* the *daʿwah* of ʾIslām first came and it proved to be, beyond any possibility of doubt, a force for good in the world. Everything

changed profoundly, not only in the Arab peninsula but all around it and inside the hearts and minds of those who embraced ʾIslām or were embraced by ʾIslāmic rule. That historical reality informed Shaykh Nadwī's conviction that the rule of ʾIslām in the societal, rather than narrowly political, sense, is not a remote ideal but a real, achievable goal which it is the duty of Muslims to strive for. Something for which they ceased to strive with sufficient wise and adaptive commitment to Qurʾān and Sunnah - this is how Shaykh Nadwī understood the passing of the leadership of the ʾIslāmic world to non-Arabic speaking Muslims, for whose political elite an affiliation to ʾIslām was, too often, a political tool, and a means rather than an end. The cultural integrity and authority of ʾIslām within the ʾIslāmic world steadily weakened, its powers were fragmented and divided against itself, and it lacked the cohesion, solidarity and civilisational energy needed to stand up against the cruelly aggressive and fast-expanding European powers.

The modern *jāhiliyyah* certainly appears to be very different from the pre-ʾIslāmic one. Its core is proclaimed to be a commitment to human autonomy, self-governing individuals negotiating from within self-governing policies within a self-regulating economic market, allowing each individual the space within which they pursue whatever good they choose. But this is a delusion, and a particularly insolent product of political rhetoric and illusive marketing. The rhetoric of individual autonomy justifies the systematic erosion of all the sources of authority and value by which individuals form notions of what the system would be for each to live a good life. There is no place in the modern *jāhiliyyah* for any concept of an authoritative tradition or *sunnah*, to give direction, meaning and value to human aspirations and actions, nor any criterion by which a course of action can always or nearly always be preferred, nor is there a scale by which to consider one action better than another, and just as importantly, they do not have a measure by which a course of action can, with the rarest of exceptions, always be considered as *ḥarām*. This trend has continued to the extent that Muslims now submit to this *jāhiliyyah*, in such a manner that the Qurʾān and Sunnah now merely serve as devices to mark communal or cultural identity, and in that function compete with other markers of belonging. As *jāhiliyyah* deepens around them, the areas of their lives on which Qurʾān and Sunnah have a bearing are expected to contract until, eventually, they themselves say that the Qurʾān and Sunnah are seventh-century edifices of limited relevance and application, that to adhere to them now is to be *medieval*, *backward* or *fundamentalist*, rather than *modern*. Due to their lives being invaded and overwhelmed by *jāhiliyyah*, they take its norms and ways, to which they have become habituated, and then contrive to *read* the authoritative sources of ʾIslām in order to conform them to those norms. In this state of mind they no longer view or experience the Qurʾān and Sunnah as God's mercy to humankind, as a guidance that makes life safer and easier for all, but rather as a burdensome nuisance and impediment, something they have to *get around*

somehow. That is the state of mind that Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan spent his time and energy combating.

He did not do so out of a loyalty to ʾIslām that might be likened to the loyalty of a people or an indigenous way of life. He clearly understood that political and cultural independence for the Muslims of India or for the Arabs in the heartlands of ʾIslām was just a stage, not the end, of a struggle. Independence was a necessary step to secure economic and political justice for peoples long-oppressed; and a necessary precondition for rebuilding a society in which people strive and help each other to *surrender their aspirations to God*, that is, to be *muslim*. The whole effort of his *daʿwah* was aimed at restoring the connection with God, rebuilding the confidence needed for individuals and society to live in a steady consciousness of answerability to God, working through this transient life in readiness for the eternal life. That is why, as many observers have remarked, he spoke and wrote *from the heart*. He never sought to impress his audience with clever political or philosophical doctrine, and very little of his work can be reduced to populist slogans, it is always too personal, too deeply felt and believed, and indeed, too learned and nuanced for that. Similarly, his hostility to Western civilisation was never an undifferentiated *in toto* rejection; rather, it was based on his view that, in spite of its achievements in science and technology, its advances in administrative efficiency and governance, this civilisation was systematically destroying the connection between human beings and their Creator. His critique was not framed within rejectionist attitudes; he never sought to prove his attachment to ʾIslām by voicing or inciting anti-Western sentiment. On the contrary, he was always civil, and consistently chose the most measured and mild terms possible to express his reservations of the West and of the consequences of Muslims surrendering to its cultural domination. Indeed, the overwhelming proportion of his efforts were directed, not negatively *against* the West but, positively, *for* ʾIslām through better appreciation of its literature and history, the biography of great Muslim personalities and, especially, of their expression in Arabic, the language of the primary sources of ʾIslāmic faith and works.

Human autonomy, which is the self-proclaimed end of modern Western civilisation, is, according to its own rhetoric, embodied in the freedom of the individual, at any given moment, to think and speak, to eat and drink, to dress, to make a living, to dispose of wealth, just as he or she pleases. This rhetoric formally recognises the constraint that how an individual pleases to act must not diminish the same freedom of other individuals to do as one pleases. Self-evidently, since what an individual desires as his or her good is shaped by their social and cultural environment, Western civilisation should be expected to respect and conserve the autonomy of such environments. That is not, nor has it ever been, the case. The reason being that if human autonomy is defined in defiance of answerability to God, it functions like *shirk* and produces the same outcomes: that is, individual and collective behaviours are disoriented

so that their understanding of means and ends becomes thoroughly perverted. In practice, accordingly, the commitment to autonomy in defiance of God degenerates into a commitment to power, the ability to impose one's will on others, in all domains: military, economic, intellectual and cultural. This entails a modern form of *jāhilī* tribalism in which the favoured group is a political and territorial entity, to whose interests those of all others are permanently subordinate and secondary: some individuals and some peoples are then more equal than others.

Modern Western civilisation does not recognise the universal human values embodied in cultural idioms different from its own. Since people do not like giving up their idioms, and especially not to foreigners, they can only be forcibly stripped from them. That is why Western colonialism was not merely a military conquest, but a cultural one; existing social and economic relationships, within which people define and understand what is good, had to be erased in favour of *modern* notions of what is good what was bad. Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's narration or evocation of the history of Muslim settlement in various territories especially in India, always carries an implied criticism of what happened under European rule. It was Muslims who *colonised* Bengal and turned it into the richest province in their domain that enriched the Muslims but not at the expense of the local people or the land. The people of India, especially the Muslims, may feel that after a century of British intrusion and then a century of occupation, a land that had been the richest in the world became one of the poorest: its economy, infrastructure, educational and other systems were all re-configured so that the physical and mental energies of its population were directed to prosper, not for its own benefit, but for the benefit of the economic elite in Britain and its local Indian agents. Yet, deep and lasting as the damage was, India got off relatively lightly, compared to sub-Saharan Africa. There, once the abolition of the slave trade presented the European nations with the moral and legal pretext for what are now called *humanitarian wars*, the native peoples' social and economic relationships were abruptly replaced by a new order which ignored their treasury of experience managing their internal relations and resources. They might cling to what they pleased of their languages and customs but these were of no use to them in building a future. Today that helpless dependency is maintained by different means, with military coercion kept well in the background, but its effects are just as pernicious.

Although racial and cultural prejudice existed and still exists, it was a psychological colouring overlaying a structural necessity: within Europe too, the same process of dislocating people from their past was enacted with the same brutality. They are most visible in the involuntary construction of nation-states out of disparate linguisitic and religious communities. This same process speedily ratified, was witnessed in Iraq under the Baʿth regime, and in numerous other new nation-states by the mass transfer of people into towns,

cutting them off from common land to provide labour for coal mines and factories.

The faster Western nations have grown in power, the faster and deeper they have been able to compel other nations into their *jāhiliyyah*. Insofar as the reach of Western civilisation is now global, so is its *jāhiliyyah*, and it is everywhere reshaping the fabric of human relationships. It divides people so that their instincts to trust and care are suppressed in favour of competitive calculations of personal or group advantage. It is dividing people from within themselves so that they defer their responsibility as moral agents to formalised external procedures, and they do so in every field, in their duties as parents, as spouses, as neighbours, as teachers and as citizens. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that those in the world who are most *free* are also those most thoroughly *domesticated*, the most compliant with the political and economic powers that dominate and define the spaces, public and private, in which they exercise their autonomy. They have been rendered incapable of acting to prevent or correct even the most egregious abuses of law and decency, carried out in their name. They seem to wonder at the terrible events presented to them, usually within the framework of entertainment, in the way that cattle respond at the sound of a shrill train whistle, that is, they are agitated but only briefly so, and soon return to feeding or other comforting-activity. Thus it has become a reliable rule for modern *governments of the people* that the many neither know nor care; of the few who do know, only a smaller number will care much; a still smaller number will care enough to act; and of that small number most will not act in a sustained way to bring about change but, rather, act to prove to themselves that they cared. In this way, protesting moral energy, if not already enfeebled by comfort and amusing distractions, soon dissipates itself as gesture. By this *jāhiliyyah* every sphere of human aspiration and activity, whether it draws primarily upon spiritual political artistic or literary imagination, has been stifled and stultified, subjected to commercial analysis and tagged with a high or a low price; what cannot be tagged is not accorded a value.

Since the course of human existence does not run in a void, it is inevitable that this *jāhiliyyah* is also dividing human beings against the natural world that was made amenable and moulded for human habitation and use. The remnant of religious sensibility for human beings, stirring a responsive gratitude to the earth's prolifically diverse and pleasing munificence, must be stifled lest it inhibit them from exploiting it to desolation. It appears to make little difference that we understand very well that we are only a part of the natural world, are dependent upon it, and absolutely indebted to it. As I mentioned earlier, human speech is governed by the the rules and structures of grammar and only for specialist purposes is it necessary to make oneself aware of those rules. This is because those structures and rules and their imperceptibility to the speaker are benign and, moreover, *ownership* of them is distributed evenly and equally among all members of the competent linguistic community. By contrast,

un-awareness of the rule structures underlying a civilisation, the patterns of relationship between information, authority and different forms of power, is not benign and neither is *ownership* of the rules evenly distributed. Thus, in reality, and especially as far as aggregate and long-term outcomes are concerned, individual human beings have little *say* over the product of their lives. It is hard to imagine that, individually, human beings could will a way of life that yields terrible suffering for other human beings distant from them in space or time. And yet, formally, they are supposed to have subscribed to economic and political practices entailing precisely that, *and are known to do so*. The outcome is grinding poverty and death for millions in far away countries. The temptation is to avoid thinking about what will happen or about what is happening now to those far afield, but, instead we accept the euphemistic jargon of political and economic experts who alone grasp the inescapability of *external costs* and *collateral damage*, and we leave matters to them.

What hope is there for Muslims to resist that temptation? Where will they look for the courage to live a life of abstinence and contentment in the service of others and of God? How will they believe that such a life is indeed still possible, not as an eccentricity for tourists to marvel at, but as the mainstream norm? What hope is there for them of relief from the dominion of the new *jāhiliyyah*?

It is shameful that some are relieved at the prospect of the centuries long Western materialist legacy returning to haunt its originators in the form of, irresistible destruction of life and property, cultural deformation, irresolvable political instability, deep systemic poverty, and hopeless anxiety.

The self-appointed number crunchers of the utilitarian arithmetic of *the greatest happiness of the greatest number* have never accounted for those beyond boundaries of clique, class, nationality and race.

It is unsurprising that those with no prospect of being on the right side of those boundaries might indulge their indignation with vengeful fantasies. But the fact remains that this kind of relief-seeking is without moral foundation and is practically futile. Anger against it does not change *jāhiliyyah* but feeds it, that is the nature of *jāhiliyyah*, and indulging that anger will therefore make it even harsher and more insolent. Many examples were presented from the arguments of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan which demonstrate that the precepts and practice of the first Muslims do not justify vengeful anger. The use of force cannot be religiously justified except on the basis of a realistic presumption that the outcome would be preferable and more beneficial than if force was not used. Shaykh Nadwī's judgement in every case put to him was that the likely harm far outweighed any good in using force to challenge abusive power. Rather, that challenge must take the form of honest counsel, patient exposition, self-reform and reform of others. The *jihād* of the heart and the tongue is not necessarily the easier option in times of suffering and oppression. Rather,

because it entails greater effort to clearly distinguish between means and ends and entails the uphill battle to persuade others, it is often the heavier burden.

There are also those who see relief in the prospect of economic or military power shifting away from Western nations to other *new* powers. But even if these *new* powers composed some or all of the ʾIslāmic nations, what difference would it make? Such a change would be like the passing of a boat's rudder from the hand of one sailor to the hand of another, when the first is unwell and needs to rest. Such a change may jar the boat, but it will not alter its course. A change in ownership of *jāhilī* power will not change its outcomes. The solution is not political. From the traditional ʾIslāmic perspective, securing political power is not the Muslims' primary duty. In their present situation, the hope of relief in narrowly political terms is a distraction from, as Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan saw it their main responsibility, namely to renew the connection between God and humanity established through the teachings and traditions of God's Messengers ﷺ, and established finally and most effectively by Muḥammad ﷺ.

The only way to defeat the force of the new *jāhiliyyah* is for Muslims to refuse the delusion of human autonomy and affirm, instead, their true status as dependent creatures answerable to their Creator. This is an act of will, affirming ones *ʾIslām*, uttered from the heart in both word and deed, and so beautifully combined and balanced in the *ṣalāh*. That is the rationale behind Shaykh Nadwī's strong emphasis on *tazkiyah*, purification of the soul. Without a prior disciplining of the soul, human beings cannot be relied upon to do what they know to be good and keep doing it in the face of distractions and temptation. Instead of doing what is good, they set aside a little time and space to remind themselves that they know what good is, and in the rest of the time and space allotted to them they simply do what others are doing, be it right or wrong. The soul will be too weak to carry the burden of human responsibility if not properly trained and sufficiently prepared: were it otherwise, God would not have sent His Messengers ﷺ nor, in particular, enabled the meticulous recording of the life and teachings of the Last Messenger ﷺ. The failure to properly train and prepare the will is the reason why ʾIslāmic groups and movements can be distracted into futile violence or simply run out of steam. It is also why so many centres of ʾIslāmic worship or learning grow stale and become an end in themselves for those who run them as a source of livelihood and self-promotion; and for those providing the funds, a way to invest in an ʾIslāmic future without inward labour. Therefore, as Shaykh Nadwī put it, the right course is to arise and answer the call to *ṣalāh*, become well and truly habituated in it, before raising or answering the call to a military *jihād*.

To imagine an ʾIslāmic future in sufficient detail involves caring about the condition of other Muslims, understanding the realities of their economic and political circumstances, and the inward and outward necessities of their lives

which place barriers between their knowledge and their practice of ʾIslām. To deal wisely with those necessities extensive and profound learning in the ʾIslāmic sciences and ʾIslāmic history alongside *tazkiyah* is undoubtedly indispensable. Without the above one cannot respond with sufficient sensitivity and adaptivity to the specific needs of individuals coping with diverse conditions. Unless it is undertaken for the sake of an academic pastime or posting, ʾIslāmic scholarship should be pursued as an effort of worship. As such, it is a commitment to abide in those circles, visited and protected by the angels, in which the teachings of God's Messenger ﷺ are remembered, studied and discussed. Within the *sunnah* one finds examples of spirituality combined with sanity, firmness with mildness and constancy with flexibility; one finds an inexhaustible patience and perseverance, abhorrence of extremism, blindness to others' errors, a sensitivity to their need for leniency, a strong desire for God's forgiveness and a joy in offering forgiveness to others, pride in the honour of being Muslim combined with humility in ones personal bearing, a determination to live well in this world, with energy, joy and curiosity, without one's horizons and aspirations being contained by it. All these are qualities that are essential in a *dāʿī*, and they were taught and embodied by Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan. He loved God, His Messenger ﷺ and His religion. His love grew until the same quality of conviction for *daʿwah*, became established in his heart as it was in the hearts of the Companions ﷺ. The highest compliment paid to his memory is that, being in his company, Muslims experienced what it must have been like to be in the company of an ʾAbū al-Dardāʾ or al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.

A *daʿwah* like that of Shaykh Nadwī's is not practiced to reinforce ʾIslāmic identity, nor to restore symbols to the Muslim nation, or restore the Muslims to a rank of world power. The authentic ʾIslāmic motivation for *daʿwah* is to help people come out of their servitude to the powers of this world by striving for servitude to God alone. This motivation has no selfishness; it does not deprive any of what they have or think they have in this world. Instead, it offers them a way to qualify for God's forgiveness. If we remember that, within thirty years of the death of God's Messenger ﷺ, there was *fitnah* among the Muslims to the extent that they fought each other, we will understand that the responsibilities and temptations of power in this world taxed Muslims as much as they have taxed other communities. Nevertheless, the conviction in the truth of ʾIslām did not wane, nor did the selflessness of the *daʿwah* of those who lived that conviction. That is why those who only had a short time before becoming lords and masters of the Arabs, who looked down upon them as ignorant savages later became their pupils in ʾIslām. Similarly, the slaves among the Muslims, were taught ʾIslām in the same spirit by their masters, thus they came to love this religion, and a number of them became famous *ʿulamāʾ* and spiritual masters, from whom countless generations of Muslims have benefited ever since.

There is a vast disparity in material power between the Muslims and the confident, relentless *jāhiliyyah* that has invaded and surrounded their lives. If

we set aside economic leverage and military capacity, and consider only the power to control and project information and images, it would seem improbable that Muslims can hold on to their faith and traditions. But they do hold on. In point of fact, the quality of commitment to ʾIslām appears, if anything, to strengthen with every attack upon the territories or resources of the Muslims and with every insult to the symbols of their religion. No doubt, given the powers aligned against them, many Muslims will see their survival alone as a victory of sorts. But this is a negative view of the matter and, if it becomes a settled state of mind, it is a way of accommodating defeat. Mere survival is not what Muslims are required to aim for, if their aim is measured by what we learn from the words and actions of the first Muslims, the dependence and reliance on God means believing in His promise to grant success to those who strive in His path. It is the duty of every Muslim, as Shaykh Nadwī stressed to hope for and desire this great responsibility. It is also the collective of every ʾIslāmic nation to make a firm determination to strive for it and to spend whatever is within their capacity for it. This responsibility was affixed to the ʾIslāmic community from the time it was brought into being in the Arabian peninsula. The community cannot be separated from it and remain itself. If the Muslims recoil from their duty of *daʿwah*, then all of mankind will remain in servitude to *jāhiliyyah* and the injustices and evils that flow from that servitude will worsen.

I end, citing the words with which Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ended his book, *Mādhā Khasir al-ʿĀlam bi ʾInḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn*, in which he appeals to the Arabs to rise up for the cause that ennobled their beginning, which is the cause of all humankind since, whether they are believers or not, there is but one God, who is All-Powerful, Merciful and Just:

> O Arabs! For how long are you going to spend your powerful forces with which you conquered the old world in narrow and constricted fields?
>
> For how long is this tremendous flood, which previously flowed with civilisations and governments, going to be confined in this narrow valley where its waves are clashing with each other?
>
> You have before you this wide world of humanity for whose leadership God chose you, and for whose guidance He selected you. The prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ was the opening for this new era in the history of your nation and the history of the entire world, for your destiny and the destiny of the entire world. So embrace the ʾIslāmic *daʿwah* once again, sacrifice yourselves for it, and strive for it:
>
> "Strive for the sake of God with the striving that is due to Him. It is He who has chosen you. He has laid no hardship on you in religion. The religion of your father, ʾIbrāhīm. It is He who has named you *Muslim* since before and also in this Qurʾān so that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. Establish, then, the *ṣalāh* and continue giving the *zakāh* and hold fast to God. He is your Master. How excellent a master and how excellent a helper" (*Sūrat al-Ḥajj*, 22: 78).

IX. GLOSSARY

ʾAdhān	The call to *ṣalāh*
ʿAllāmah	It is the superlative of ʿĀlim and refers to one whose religious knowledge is recognised in all fields of ʾIslāmic sciences
ʿĀlim pl. ʿUlamāʾ	An expert in a religious science learned scholar in a specific field of research
ʾAmīr pl. ʾUmarāʾ	Leader
ʾAhl al-Bidʿah	Those who follow blameworthy innovated practices in religion
ʿAṣr	Afternoon *ṣalāh*
ʾAwāʾil	The opening ḥadīths of the major ḥadīth collections
ʾĀyah pl. ʾĀyāt	A verse of the Qurʾān
Bidʿah	An innovation in religion, usually considered blameworthy
Bāṭil	Void, nugatory
Dāʿī pl. Duʿāt	One who calls to ʾIslām
Daʿwah	Calling others to ʾIslām
Dhuhr	Noon *ṣalāh*
Dīnār	A gold coin
Dirham	A silver coin
Duʿāʾ pl. ʾAdʿiyah	Supplication
Fajr	Dawn *ṣalāh*
Farḍ pl. Farāʾiḍ	Obligation
Farḍ al-ʿAyn	Individual obligation
Farḍ al-Kifāyah	Communal obligation
Faqīh pl. Fuqahāʾ	Jurist, an expert in ʾIslāmic jurisprudence
Fatwā pl. Fatāwā	Legal dictum
Fatrah	The period between one Prophet and another
Fiqh	The science of ʾIslāmic jurisprudence
Ghusl	Ritual bath, the complete washing of the body which removes all ritual imputiry
Ḥadīth pl. ʾAḥadīth	Account of a saying, act or approval of the Prophet ﷺ or a Companion
Ḥalāl	Lawful, permissible
Ḥajj	Major pilgrimage to Makkah
Ḥarām	Unlawful, prohibited
Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn	Makkah and Madīnah
Ḥukm	Ruling or judgement

ᶜIbādah pl. ᶜIbādāt	A ritual act of worship
ᵓIjāzah pl. ᵓIjāzāt	Authorisation from a scholar to transmit or convey specific knowledge
ᵓIjmāᶜ	Consensus of all qualified jurists of an age
ᵓIjtihād	The process of deriving a verdict in ᵓIslāmic law, drawing directly from original sources using the underlying principles of ᵓIslāmic jurisprudence
ᵓImām pl. ᵓAᵓimmah	A leader, leading daily ṣalawāt, a great authority in religion
ᵓĪmān	Faith
ᶜIshāᵓ	Night *ṣalāh*
ᵓIᶜtikāf	The practice of seclusion in a mosque, typically carried out during the month of Ramaḍān for a specified number of days
Jāhiliyyah	The pre-ᵓIslāmic period, lit. 'ignorance'
Jāᵓiz	Permissible
Jamāᶜah	Group
Janāzah pl. Janāᵓiz	Funeral *ṣalāh*
Jumuᶜah	Friday
Juz pl. ᵓajzāᵓ	A part of something, or one out of thirty parts of the Qurᵓān.
Kaᶜbah	The House of ᵓAllāh in Makkah
Khalīfāh pl. Khulafāᵓ	A deputy of a Shaykh of Ṣūfī ṭarīqa, it also refers to leadership of the entire Muslim *ᵓummah*, or that of ᵓAbū Bakr and ᶜUmar, ᵓUthmān and ᶜAlī ﷺ
Khānqah	A building used for the gatherings of a Ṣūfī ṭarīqah
Kuṭbah	An address, given during the Friday *ṣalāh* and at other times
Madrasah	An ᵓIslāmic seminary
Madhhab pl. Madhāhib	School of legal thought
Maghrib	Sunset *ṣalāh*
Makrūh	Disliked according to the *sharīᶜah*
Maᶜrifah	Knowledge of God
Masjid pl. Masājid	Place of *ṣalāh*
Masjid al-Ḥarām	The sacred *masjid* in Makkah
Markaz	Position, station or centre
Matāᶜ	Provision
Mawlānā	A religious scholar
Muᵓdhdhin	The one who calls the *ᵓadhān*
Muftī	A jurisprudent who can issue fatwā

Mujtahid	One who can perform *ᵓijtihād*
Muqallid	One who follows a *mujtahid*
Murīd pl. Murīdīn	In *taṣawwuf*, a disciple of a shaykh of the spiritual path
Mushrik	A polytheist who associates partners with God
Nafl pl. Nawāfil	Supererogatory acts of worship
Naṣ pl. Nuṣūṣ	Primarily Qurᵓan and Sunnah
Niṣāb	The threshold level above which one is liable to pay *zakāh*
Niyyah	Intention
Qiblah	Direction of prayer, i.e. al-Kaᶜbah
Qurᵓān	The final revelation from ᵓAllāh which He revealed to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ
Rajul pl. Rijāl	A term in the *ḥadīth* sciences for the narrators of *ḥadīth*, and the biographical literature associated with them. Lit. man
Rakᶜah pl. Rakaᶜāt	A unit of *ṣalāh*, consisting of standing, reciting al-Qurᵓān, bowing and prostrating
Riwāyah pl. Riwāyāt	Narration of a *ḥadīth*
Rukn pl. ᵓArkān	Lit. pillar, essential elements
Ṣaḥīḥ pl. Ṣiḥāḥ	Authentic, used in reference to a sound ḥadīth
Ṣalāh pl. Ṣalawāt	Prayer
Sanad pl. ᵓAsānīd	In the ḥadīth sciences, the chain of narration.
Shahīd	Martyr
Sharīᶜah	Divine law based on the Qurᵓān and Sunnah
Sharṭ pl. Shurūṭ	Condition, prerequisite
Shirk	Practice of associating partners to God, or polytheism
Ṣifah pl. Ṣifāt	In theology, the attributes of God
Siḥāḥ Sittah	A term referring to the six canonical collections of ḥadīth of ᵓImām al-Bukhārī, ᵓImām Muslim, ᵓImām al-Tirmidhī, ᵓImām al-Nasāᵓī, ᵓImām ᵓAbū Dāwūd, and ᵓImām Ibn Mājah
Siwāk	Tooth-stick
Ṣiyām	The practice of fasting in which one abstains from food, drink and conjugal relations during daylight hours
Ṣūfī	One who practices *taṣawwuf*
Sunnah pl. Sunan	The exemplary practice of the Prophet ﷺ; recommended practice

Sūrah pl. Suwar	A chapter of the Qurʾān
Ṭabaqāt	A genre of literature in which biographies of individuals associated with a particular religious discipline are gathered in a single volume
Tābiᶜī	The generation following the Companions of the Messenger of God ﷺ
Tafsīr pl. Tafāsīr	Qurʾānic exegesis
Tahajjud	Recommended night *ṣalāh*
Takbīr	Uttering *ʾAllāh ʾAkbar*
Taqlīd	Following the authority of a mujtahid
Tarbiyah	The art of training and raising an individual to be an exemplary Muslim
Tarāwīḥ	Supererogatory *ṣalāh* during the nights of Ramaḍān
Taṣawwuf	The discipline of the Ṣūfī, involving spiritual exercises
Tasbīḥ	Uttering *Subḥān ʾAllāh*
Tawḥīd	The Oneness of God
Tazkiyah	Purification of the self, often used synonymouslyfor *taṣawwuf*
ʾUmmah pl. ʾUmam	The ʾIslāmic community or nation
ʾUṣūl al-Fiqh	The principles underlying ʾIslāmic jurisprudence
Wājib pl. Wājibāt	Complusory act of worship
Walī pl. ʾAwliyāʾ	Righteous friends of God
Walīmah	The post-wedding feast
Wilāyah	The state of friendship or nearness to God.
Wuḍūʾ	Ablution from minor ritual impurity
Zakāh	Ritual giving of alms

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SHAYKH ʾABŪ AL-ḤASAN ʿALI NADWĪ
His Life & Works

Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī (1914-1999/1332-1419 AH), one of the most widely read and influential scholars of our time, was likened by his intellectual peers to the exemplary scholars of the earliest generations of ʾIslām. His writings have been translated (from Arabic or Urdu) into all of the major languages of the world and remain popular from one generation to the next. In this account by a former student, various aspects of Shaykh ʾAbū al-Ḥasan's life and works are presented - his education and upbringing, his role as a leader and guide, his writings, and his *daʿwah* and *tarbiyah* (calling people to Islam and training others to do so). This biography sets out his responce to groups and movements that did not share his distinctive approach to issues of concern to Muslim. The unifying theme of the book is Shaykh Nadwī's timeless commitment, as a scholar and *dāʿī*, to the spiritual well-being of Muslims, emphasising their relationship with God and each other, and their response to Western cultural influences.

MOḤAMMAD ʾAKRAM NADWI is one of the UK's best-known scholars with a classical training in the ʾIslāmic religious sciences. He studied, and later taught, at the renowned Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ in Lucknow, India, and holds a doctorate from the University of Lucknow. Currently a Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, he is also the author of over 25 books on a range of subjects including Ḥadīth, Fiqh, Arabic grammar and Islamic biographies, published in Arabic, English and Urdu. His magnum opus is a forty-volume compilation of biographies of women scholars of Ḥadīth; the introduction to this study was translated into English and published as *al-Muḥaddithāt: The Women Scholars in ʾIslām* (2007). His more recent titles include *ʾAbū Ḥanīfah: His Life, Legal Method and Legacy* (2010) and the second volume of *al-Fiqh al-ʾIslāmī: Zakāh, Ṣawm and Ḥajj* (2012).